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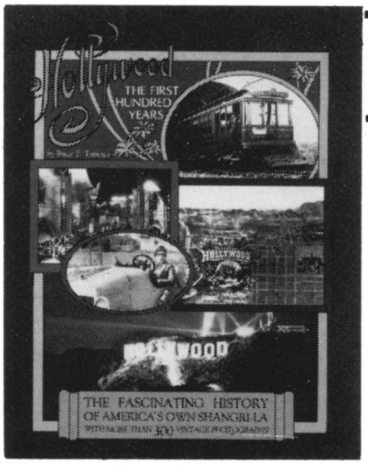

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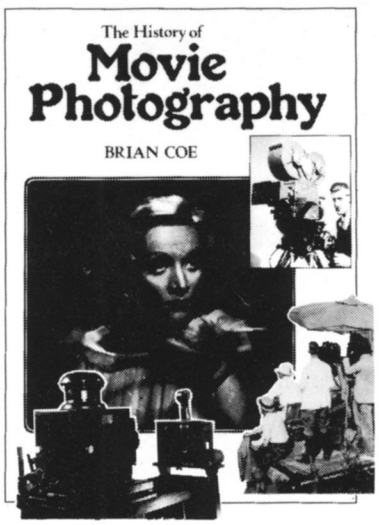

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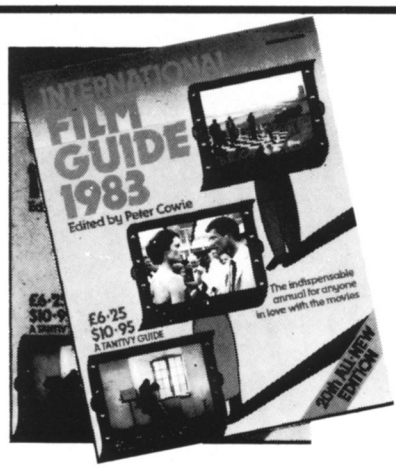

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CONTRIBUTORS

AUDI BOCK, author of *Japanese Film Directors*, interprets for Kurosawa and Oshima. KATE BENN studies women and film at San Francisco State University. JULIANNE BURTON specializes in Latin American film; she teaches at UC Santa Cruz. BILL DESOWITZ is a film student in Southern California. TOM DOHERTY teaches at the University of Iowa and is writing a book on exploitation films. JOHN FELL is a member of our editorial board and editor of *Film Before Griffith* (UC Press). KATHE GEIST wrote her dissertation on Wim Wenders; she teaches at Illinois State University. J. SCOTT GRANT has just graduated from Cal Arts. DAN GREENBERG recently wrote an article on faulty reference books for *FQ*. STEPHEN L. HANSON was Associate Editor and PATRICIA KING HANSON is now Associate Editor of *McGill's Survey of Cinema* (along with Karen Jaehne, to whom we incorrectly attributed sole occupancy of the role two issues back). BRIAN HENDERSON, who teaches at SUNY Buffalo, is the author of *A Critique of Film Theory*. KAREN JAEHNE lives in Washington, DC, and is Associate Editor on the foreign volumes of *McGill's Survey of Cinema*. SATTI KHANNA is a researcher in Asian studies at the University of California, Berkeley. RAOUL KULBERG is a member of the Learning Resources faculty at the University of DC. LULI McCARROLL has written for *Wide Angle* and *Camera Obscura*. ARTHUR McCLURE teaches at Central Missouri State. PETER McINERNEY wrote an article on Vietnam war films for *FQ*. PAUL MICHAUD, Paris-based filmmaker, is currently Associate Producer of Bresson's *L'Argent*. JAMES NAREMORE teaches at Indiana and is writing a book on film acting. BILL NICHOLS is the editor of *Movies and Methods*; he is currently preparing Vol. II. J. M. PURCELL teaches in Peoria, Illinois. BARBARA and LEONARD QUART recently spent some time in London. GEORGE ROBINSON is a critic on a noncommercial radio station in New York and teaches at Dowling College. ELLEN SEITER teaches at the University of Oregon. EDWARD SIKOV lives in New York City. ANTHONY SLIDE is the editor of the Scarecrow Press series, *Selected Film Criticism*. GARRETT STEWART teaches at the University of California, Santa Barbara; his book on the novel, *Death Sentences*, will shortly be published by Harvard Press. PAUL THOMAS teaches at Berkeley. GREGORY WATERS is at the University of Michigan, Flint. ALAN WILLIAMS, author of *Max Ophuls and the Cinema of Desire*, teaches at Rutgers. LINDA WILLIAMS (no relation) is the author of *Figures of Desire*, a study of surrealist film; she teaches at the Univ. of Illinois, Chicago Circle. DON WILLIS, who lives in Berkeley, frequently writes on fantasy and horror films. FABRICE ZIOLKOWSKI is now writing about French film economics and history.

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KATHE GEIST

Yasujiro Ozu:
Notes on a Retrospective

Yasujiro Ozu made films from the late twenties through the early sixties, yet in the West he is mainly known for the quietistic home dramas he made in the fifties and early sixties. In the fall of 1982, New York's Japan Society sponsored the first American retrospective of all the extant work of Ozu including many films never shown before in the United States. The following article is based on insights gained from the retrospective and will concentrate on three aspects of Ozu's work: stylistic contrasts between the prewar and postwar films, Ozu's famed still-life shots—otherwise known as "empty" or "pillow" shots, and Ozu's attitude toward westernization.

I

Donald Richie has stressed Ozu's continual evolution as a film-maker and has taken to task those wishing to see an abrupt change in Ozu's style after World War II.[1] Nevertheless Ozu's films made from 1949 (*Late Spring*) onward do differ markedly from those made between 1929 (Ozu's earliest extant film *Days of Youth*) and 1937 (*What Did the Lady Forget?*). In the decade between 1938 and 1948 Ozu went to war. In this decade he made only four films: *The Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family* (1941) and *There Was a Father* (1942), made during the war and considered to be among his best, and *A Record of a Tenement Gentleman* (1947) and *A Hen in the Wind* (1948), made immediately after the war and set in the squalor of Japan's postwar reconstruction period. These four films appear to mediate stylistically between the pre- and postwar periods. While *There Was a Father* anticipates the postwar films in its quietude and stasis, *Tenement Gentleman* harks back to the prewar "Kihachi" films with their broad humor and fluid construction. (These were named after the main character, played by Takeshi Sakamoto.) While anticipating the home dramas which follow it, *A Hen in the Wind* is too topical, melodramatic, and fluid in style to fit with the post-1949 films.

Ozu's prewar films were largely comedies, though they also include melodramas, gangster films (after an Ozuesque fashion), home dramas with relatively little humor, and the Kihachi films about the lower classes. (Of the twenty lost films, all from the prewar period, at least thirteen were comedies.) Of the thirteen films made after 1949, most are home dramas, shot in a distinctly less expressive style, without intense melodrama or comedy. Exceptions are *Ohayo* (1959), usually considered a remake of the 1932 *I Was Born, But . . . , Floating Weeds* (1959), a re-make of the 1934 *A Story of Floating Weeds,* and the melodramatic *Tokyo Twilight* (1957). Thus Ozu shifted the focus of his work from comedy and other genres evoking a fairly extreme audience reaction to contemplative home dramas with endearing but quiet humor. Whatever his genre, Ozu retained in the prewar films a stylistic vocabulary which gives those films a particular look and which he dropped for the most part after 1949.

TOKYO TWILIGHT (1957)

For example, in the prewar period Ozu frequently used chiaroscuro lighting. He toned down his use of it during the 1938–1948 period. In *A Hen in the Wind* (1948), he used flat lighting throughout the first half of the film and reverted to chiaroscuro lighting after the husband discovers his wife's adultery. In the post-1949 period he used chiaroscuro lighting only in the melodramatic *Tokyo Twilight.*[2]

Ozu used selective focus or contrasting focus in his prewar films but eliminated the device from his post-1949 films. He begins *Woman of Tokyo* (1934) by focussing on the gas burner in the siblings' apartment, leaving the rest of the set out of focus. When, at the end of the scene, the sister goes to the back of the room to make up her face in a mirror, the camera remains focused on a pile of cooking utensils in the foreground of the shot before cutting to a shot of her in focus at the mirror. In *An Inn in Tokyo* (1935) Ozu focuses on the faces of the two brothers, who are sitting together inside the inn, and sometimes, for no apparent reason, he focuses on one face only, leaving the other blurred. Together with the chiaroscuro lighting, selective focus dramatizes objects and settings and gives to space a plastic, malleable quality. Ozu manipulates the focus contrary to the viewer's interest, and the viewer, forced to watch an interesting object which is out of focus—the sister making herself up in *Woman of Tokyo* —yearns to pull the camera through space to the object of interest. Thus space enacts a drama of its own, and the viewer's awareness of space increases correspondingly. After 1949 Ozu no longer wanted such plasticity or such dramatization of objects and setting. Instead he strove for a flatness and monotony that would no longer manipulate the audience by dictating what it was allowed to see well-lit and in focus and what would be left indistinct, but would invite a contemplative attitude. After 1949 Ozu also eliminated or, for the most part, made inconspicuous, an occasionally moving camera, which enhanced the drama and plasticity of the early films.

In his prewar films Ozu used cinematic means to both tease his audience and create humor. A favorite device was to show some portion of a person's body without identifying the owner. In *Where Are Now the Dreams of Youth?* (1932), he cuts from a scene in which the hero's father, a company president, lies dying to a shot of the legs of suited men standing crowded together in a room. The viewer does not know who the legs belong to, where they are, or why. Only subsequently does Ozu show the upper parts of the men's bodies and reveal that they are the dead president's employees listening to a long-winded speech by the company's vice president.

In *Woman of Tokyo* (1933) Ozu creates a wonderfully ambiguous sequence by cutting directly from his story to scenes from the American 1932 omnibus film, *If I Had a Million,* and back again. The sequence runs as follows: cut from the sister's fingers typing madly to the titles of *If I Had a Million*—she thus appears to have been typing them; a brief shot of her brother Ryoichi and his fiancée Harue watching the film; a scene from *Million* showing a huge outer office and typing pool. Only the brief glance at Ryoichi and Harue saves us from believing we are witnessing a strange transformation of the sister's office. The ensuing scene from *Million* shows Charles Laughton passing through a humorously long series of doors. Upon his opening the last one, the scene cuts to objects in Harue's house followed by a shot of her brother dressing. Thus Laughton appears to have walked into Harue's house.

PASSING FANCY (1933)

In keeping with his use of selective focus in the prewar films, Ozu often framed a shot with the blurred outline of a person or object in the extreme foreground as he focused on a figure further back and in the center of the frame. In *Passing Fancy* (1933) the camera shifts from the boy Tomio standing near the distraught ingenue Harue to a full frame of Harue including only the leg of Tomio to her right. In the extreme upper right corner, however, the blurred but unmistakable form of Tomio's hand scratches his behind. Such scratching is common in Ozu's prewar films, and this shot from *Passing Fancy* is perhaps its apotheosis!

Although they contain few outright gags,

Ozu's postwar films are frequently humorous. But their humor has been created by acting, staging, or writing rather than by cinematic means. In *Early Summer* (1951), the brother Koichi eavesdrops unseen behind a sliding door on a conversation between his wife and his sister Noriko. When Noriko goes out of the room, he opens the sliding door and literally falls into the scene to the shock of both his wife and the audience. Noriko returns, and the scene continues, its humor centered around the ambiguous space created by the sliding door. However, the humor here could have been realized as easily on stage as on screen and is typical of the postwar films.[3]

In his prewar films Ozu frequently indicated transitions or summarized an event through a series of close-ups of objects or parts of bodies. In *Tokyo Chorus* (1931), for example, a sequence which begins with the old teacher going into his house to change into his kimono before joining the class reunion in his restaurant continues by showing only his apron dropping to the floor, his kimono being unwrapped (presumably by him), rice being scooped onto plates, curry being ladled on the rice, the sign in his shop announcing curry rice as the Chef's Special, and hats on a hat rack. At the end of the sequence the teacher comes into the restaurant dressed in his kimono, and the party begins. But the fact that the teacher is changing his clothes, that the party is getting underway, and that the guests have arrived is first established through a montage of objects with or without unidentified hands or feet manipulating them. From the logic of the story the audience knows whose hands are manipulating the objects, but elsewhere Ozu withholds such information, again by way of teasing his audience. In *Where Are Now the Dreams of Youth?* the hero's second marriage interview is shown primarily through shots of hands: the hero's, the girl's, and those of the go-between, the hero's uncle. Although we come to suspect what is going on, no establishing shots introduce this dialogue of hands. In *Walk Cheerfully* (1930) the workers' arrival in the office is signalled by scores of feet hurrying along the sidewalk, by hats being flung on a hat rack, and by typewriters being uncovered. The routine is reversed in the evening, except that among the pairs of hurrying feet, one female pair walks slowly and uncertainly. An audience used to Ozu's hieroglyphics knows they belong to the heroine Yasue before she is shown turning back from the crowd to look for her lover.

In his postwar films Ozu dropped both the hieroglyphic cutting and the showing of body parts as the central subject of a shot before showing the identifying heads. Probably he came to feel that showing bodies without heads, while a direct assault on conventional continuity, which he frequently disregarded, was undignified and at the expense of his characters. The frantic pace of the hieroglyphic cutting would also have been at odds with the quiet, measured rhythm of his postwar films. The hieroglyphics persist only in the transition shots of the late films, which select a hallway or alleyway, a particular view of a building, or a particular object to stand for and identify a particular location.

II

The kind of shot Ozu used for transitions in his late films has been referred to as a still life, an empty shot, a curtain shot, and even a pillow shot. Such shots sometimes occur within continuous scenes as well as at the beginning and end of scenes. They are either unpeopled or peopled with characters other than those in the story. They fascinate critics, who attribute more mystery and ineffability to them than is warranted.

Noël Burch, who invented the term "pillow shot," sees them as suspending "the diegetic flow"[4] and cites examples from the first scene in *Woman of Tokyo*. In this scene the brother Ryoichi looks at a hole in his sock and asks if there are any others. These shots follow:

A close-up of the socks hanging on a little "sock tree" photographed from inside the window.*
The sister looking from the window to her brother.
The brother looking at his sister.
A view of his sockless foot.
The sock tree from inside the house.*
The sock tree from outside the house, the camera having been placed along the side of the house; the sister leaning out the window into the shot, then looking away from the sock tree, presumably towards . . .
A tree against the sky.*

The sister still leaning out the window, turning to the sock tree and taking down some socks.

The asterisked shots are those Burch sees as suspending the narrative flow. Yet all three are point-of-view shots from the sister's POV. The first shot of the sock tree is what she sees before turning around to tell her brother that she has clean socks for him. The second shot of the sock tree is her view as she moves toward the window which she subsequently opens and leans out of. The third shot of the sock tree, now from outside the house, is not the sister's POV, but it does not interrupt the narrative. Rather we watch it for the length of time it takes the sister to get to the window and open it. Finally the shot of the tree against the sky is clearly the sister's POV since she is shown looking away from the sock tree towards something else, which we have to assume is the tree in the following shot. In none of these still-life shots is the narrative flow suspended. Rather, in the case of the first two shots of the sock tree, the rules of classical continuity have been subverted: the POV shot is shown before the POV is identified. Likewise, the next scene in *Woman of Tokyo* begins with a close-up of a policeman's gloves, followed by a title, followed by a shot of the policeman. Again the narrative has not been suspended; classical continuity has merely been reversed. In a process much like waiting for the verb at the end of a German sentence, Ozu makes us wait to find out who the owner of the gloves and the speaker of the lines is. Ozu withholds narrative information just as, for comic effect, he shows parts of bodies before identifying the owners, but this is not the same as "suspending" the narrative. What Burch calls pillow shots, which he sees as lying strictly outside the narrative flow, are often narrative shots out of order, small eddies in the narrative flow, which the viewer must re-order in his mind.

Elsewhere in *Woman of Tokyo* one potential pillow shot is not only part of the narrative flow, it jumps the acute viewer ahead of the narrative. Upon discovering that his sister has been supporting him by prostituting herself, Ryoichi runs out of their home and is shown walking at night through back alleys. Cutting to the home of Ryoichi's fiancée Harue, Ozu begins the next scene with a close-up of the gloves of Harue's policeman brother, which are hanging up to dry. They are tied with twine and hang with the wrist ends flopped over to the side and the fingers dangling down. They resemble a body hanging from a noose and suggest to the audience that Ryoichi has hung himself, although his suicide is not revealed to the characters until the end of this rather lengthy scene. That these gloves are meant to symbolize Ryoichi's fate is evident from the emphasis placed on other hanging objects in the scene. The gloves in the close-up are evidently one of two pairs which hang against the window and form an ominous background to most of the shots in the scene. When the neighbor boy comes to call Harue to the telephone, he toys briefly with a pair of boots which hang above his head in the hallway.

Other writers emphasize the emptiness of Ozu's still-life shots, seeing them as absorbing the resonances of the narrative without giving forth resonances of their own. Yet often these authors have simply missed the narrative or symbolic intent of the still-life shots. In *Early Summer* the old couple speak with a neighbor about their son, who is missing in action. The mother says she still can't believe he's dead, but the father acknowledges, "He won't return." A shot of giant paper carp flying on a pole above a house follows. Since such paper fish are flown in Japan in May in celebration of Boys' Day, this shot reinforces the nostalgia of the conversation about the missing son. Don Willis, not recognizing these "banners" as Boys' Day fish, has written: "The shot is like an echo or restatement of the father's words, objective, without inflection."[5] In fact, the shot is neither objective nor empty. It hardly advances the narrative, but certainly layers it with meaning. The fish also testify to the time of year—early summer—and thus perform a narrative function.

Many of the "empty" shots in Ozu's films are used to reinforce the nostalgia or sense of life's transience which informs all of Ozu's films, even the most hilarious comedies. Shots of trains, smoke, hallways, bridges, and drying laundry may appear without specific narrative context, but somewhere within his oeuvre Ozu has made the significance of such shots clear. His famous trains, for example, embody disappearing time and varying space. (The

concept of unity in time and space is basic to traditional Japanese culture.) When a train passes the young lovers in *A Story of Floating Weeds,* the girl Otoki runs after it crying, "We'll be parted soon." In fact the lovers are not parted, but father and son are—for Ozu the greater tragedy—and the film ends with an exterior shot of the train which is taking the father away from his son.

Particularly in his later films, Ozu frequently included hallways and alleyways among the transition shots. Often characters enter a scene by coming into the previously empty hallway of a home, an apartment building, or an office building. Ozu's well-known bar scenes inevitably begin with a shot of the alleyway outside the bar. Critics are generally mystified by a slow dolly shot in *Early Spring* (1956) down the empty hallway of an office building towards nothing. Hallways and alleyways are obvious symbols of passage, and most of Ozu's late films center around passages from one stage of human life to another.

Bridges too signify passage. The young husband in *A Hen in the Wind* is shown crossing a bridge in order to visit the house where his wife prostituted herself. He is journeying from innocence to experience, which for him includes both disillusionment and compassion. In *Late Autumn* (1960) a shot of a bridge followed by that of a painting of a bridge appear near the beginning and end of the film. The story concerns a daughter who must be pushed into marriage, and these paired shots of bridges signify the passage with which the entire film is concerned.

Smoke is another image of transience in Ozu's films. In *The End of Summer* (1961) the smoke issuing from the crematorium chimney comes from the burning corpse of old Manbei, head of the Kohayakawa family. In a series of reaction shots the members of his family watch the smoke in solemn distress, for it signals not only each one's personal loss, but the end of the family as it has existed for generations. Smokestacks and smoke or steam from various sources—tea kettles, incense, steam trains—occur throughout Ozu's films, sometimes in the background of peopled scenes but more often in the still-life shots. They may refer to someone's death, but more often they comment generally on the passing of life; still their ultimate reference is the crematorium. A chimney stands behind the tree that the sister sees outside her window in *Woman of Tokyo.* When, at the beginning of the film, she looks out the window, little smoke comes from the chimney. After the brother's suicide the tree is shown a second time; the chimney is smoking furiously.

A less obvious Ozu symbol of transience is laundry hanging out to dry on bamboo poles. I do not know whether drying laundry has some special significance for the Japanese or whether it was Ozu's private symbol, but it occurs in almost every Ozu film. Its significance is established most concretely in *Tokyo Chorus.* The hero Okajima has been out of work for some time and has even sold his wife's kimonos in order to see his daughter through a childhood illness. He meets his former teacher, who offers him temporary work in his new restaurant and promises to speak to some officials on Okajima's behalf. The teacher first gives Okajima the job of advertising the restaurant by carrying large signs through the streets. Okajima's wife sees him from a passing trolley and is mortified. At home she berates him for stooping to such work. At this point Okajima must feel he just can't win. He looks outside. A shot of a smoking chimney is followed by a shot of laundry hanging on a pole to dry, a shot of Okajima, a shot of the laundry, a shot of Okajima, and a title: "I'm getting old; I've lost my energy." Then a shot of his wife, the laundry, his wife, and the laundry again. She understands and agrees to help him in the restaurant. The juxtaposition of the laundry with the smokestack and Okajima's comment about feeling old imply that the laundry as well as the smokestack is a symbol of transience. Richie and others have noted that in observing and accepting the transience of life, the Japanese in general and Ozu in particular also uncover its loveliness and preciousness. Thus the shots of laundry accompany not only Okajima's sorrowful lines but his wife's change of heart as well. She suddenly recognizes all that her husband has been through and perhaps also glimpses what the young rarely acknowledge, the shortness and preciousness of life. Although drying laundry usually accompanies scenes involving disappointment in Ozu's films, transience also includes change of heart and change of fortune. Thus shots

of drying laundry are appended to the very happy sequence in *Equinox Flower* (1958) in which the father has a change of heart and agrees to visit his older daughter, who has recently married without his approval. Here the clothes flap joyously in the wind.

Among Ozu's transition shots are certain office-building exteriors which also have thematic significance. When showing a building within a group of transition shots—the Kyoto pagoda in *Late Spring* for example—Ozu frequently included three successive shots of the building, each one closer than the one before. The effect is visually pleasing and rhythmically satisfying. Ozu used this technique when showing the office building in which his protagonist works in *Early Spring*. He first shows a long shot of the building flanked by two other buildings. His angle is such that the three buildings create an enclosed space, a cul-de-sac. His next shot is closer, and his final shot is a close-up: a flat plane filled by several banks of windows, which appears on the screen as a two-dimensional series of boxes—precisely Ozu's view of the office worker's life as expressed in many of his films, particularly *Early Spring*. Office building exteriors are treated similarly in several other films, among them *There Was a Father,* in which the father gives up his more individualistic job as a teacher, because he feels he failed its responsibilities, and joins the anonymous ranks of Japanese salaried men. These shots illustrate yet another instance in which Ozu's still lifes are not empty but full of meaning, this time with pointed social commentary.

III

Throughout his films Ozu uses westernization to characterize, sometimes to ridicule, certain individuals. Rich people in the prewar films live in western or partially western-style houses—the boss in *I Was Born, But . . . ,* the count in *The Lady and the Beard,* the family in *What Did the Lady Forget?* A picket fence, dog house, and lawn chairs—the only part of their establishment they can afford to westernize—mock the upward strivings of the boys' family in *I Was Born, But . . . .* Once Ozu came to identify with his upper-middle-class families, as he did in his postwar films, he placed them in Japanese houses. Yet he continued to use western affectations for characterization. The emancipated Aya's home is westernized in *Late Spring* as is the bedroom of the pretentious wife in *The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice.* In *The Munekata Sisters* Hiroshi's western drawing room, influenced by his long sojourn in Paris, indicates the gulf between him and the very traditional Setsuko and predicts the eventual failure of their marriage plans.

Female cliques seem to have baffled Ozu. He ridicules the wealthy young ladies in *The Lady and the Beard* and the leisured housewives in *What Did the Lady Forget?,* and loads both groups with western affectations. The first group holds a western-style birthday party during which they try to get the tradition-bound hero to dance with them. In *What Did the Lady Forget?* the Choko Iida character's fox stole becomes an object of mirth. While Ozu rarely made such fun at his characters' expense in the postwar films, he continued to characterize female friends in terms of western influences. In *Late Spring* Noriko serves Aya tea western-style, and they laugh when Noriko's father, who has brought the tea tray up to them, forgets spoons and sugar, not used when drinking tea Japanese-style. In *Early Summer* Ozu shows the girlfriends meeting in a modernistic restaurant, sitting under a grotesquely funny Picassoesque mural.

Ozu's students in his student comedies and his student-like gangsters in *Walk Cheerfully* (1930) have elaborate routines, a meld of musical comedy and Harold Lloyd,[6] which they perform to confirm their status as part of the group. Along with the college pennants and movie posters that decorate their rooms, these routines further exemplify Ozu's inclu-

DAYS OF YOUTH (1929)

sion of western influences in his films. But there is a difference. Ozu's characterization of rich people and female friends is negative or, at best, neutral; his characterization of the students is positive, for they are exuberant and alive in contrast to the staid culture around them. In fact, his students are to some extent a self-portrait, for he too greatly enjoyed and was influenced by American films.

In 1940 Japanese director Mansaku Itami wrote: "The first thing we learned from American movies was a fast-paced life style . . . the next, a lively manner and a readiness to take decisive action. Lastly, we learned to take an affirmative, purposeful, even combative attitude toward life. . . . In any American movie I can hear someone crying out: Young man, be dauntless! Have more pride and backbone!"[7] Judging by his prewar films, young Ozu felt the same way. Frequently he created a boisterous, happy-go-lucky world which laid waste the prevailing manners and mores of Japan. Arranged marriages were scorned and love matches endorsed, bosses challenged, professors bamboozled, rich people and nobility ridiculed. In *What Did the Lady Forget?* (1937) a professor pals with his student and a modern young niece sets a household on its ear. Order is restored in the postwar films. Marriages are arranged for young women, and those who dare to choose their own husbands encounter serious opposition from their families. *The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice* (1952) is the exception that proves the rule. In the tradition of Ozu's prewar films *Green Tea* contains a humorous put-down of an *omiai* or marriage interview, justified by the young woman's subsequent love match. The film was made from a script, however, that Ozu had written during the war. Anyone taking Ozu's pre- and postwar films to be an accurate portrayal of Japanese society would be convinced that the country had become vastly more conservative after the war. In fact, the opposite was true. In prewar Japan, which was essentially repressive and becoming ever more so throughout the thirties, Ozu responded with youthful enthusiasm to American idealism. After Japan's defeat Ozu preferred to celebrate what was best in Japanese culture, now in danger of being completely overrun by western, particularly American, influences. "There's real beauty in old Japan," says the father (Chishu Ryu) in *The Munekata Sisters* (1950).

Already in 1942 Ozu had turned away from the boisterous embrace of American ideals in his thirties comedies. "Traditional Japanese art is profoundly beautiful," says the father (Ryu again) in *There Was a Father,* a film whose stasis prefigures the style of the postwar films. The father exhorts his son to do his duty and not give in to sentimental desires; he thus upholds a traditional Japanese as well as a wartime virtue. Ozu's espousal of traditional Japanese culture and virtues in the early forties was undoubtedly due to the war effort. If American films inspired maverick Japanese in the twenties and thirties, American arms threatened to extinguish them in the forties. Though no friend of Japan's militarist government, Ozu was undoubtedly patriotic. In *Early Spring* (1956) three veterans discuss the war. "We were forced to fight and fought reluctantly," says one. "But I didn't want to lose," counters another. Only in *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962) does the Japanese war effort become an object of comedy. When his former petty officer expresses glee at the fantasy of blue-eyed blondes plunking away on samisens in New York (had Japan won the war), the protagonist Hirayama admits, "Then it's a good thing we lost!"

In *A Hen in the Wind* (1948) the husband's disillusionment when he comes home from the war and finds his wife has prostituted herself out of necessity may reflect Ozu's own disillusionment. One Japanese author has suggested that in a number of the postwar films a character named Shukichi or Shuhei—usually played by Chishu Ryu—functions as an alter ego for Ozu.[8] Ozu tended to give similar characters, often played by the same actor, the same name in film after film. If Shukichi is the name he settled on for his "alter ego," it is significant that the young husband in *Hen in the Wind,* although not played by Ryu, is named Shuichi, a close variant. In any case the war years appear to have been critical for Ozu. They changed his attitude toward American models of freedom and fomented stylistic changes in his films as well.

Since the Museum of Modern Art's purchase last summer of eight Ozu films for its

archive, 32 of Ozu's 34 extant films are now housed in the United States.[9] With the US now a major repository of Ozu films, it is to be hoped that more Americans will be able to enjoy the total spectrum of Ozu's work, which to date has had only limited exposure. Ozu's films are a major monument in the history of art. Their visual brilliance, wit, and concentration are the work of a consummate artist with more than a touch of genius.

The author wishes to thank David Owens of New York's Japan Society for his generous help in the preparation of this article.

NOTES

1. *Ozu* (Berkeley: 1974), p. 232.
2. Ozu's use of chiaroscuro lighting and his near obsession with inanimate objects in the prewar films suggests that German films from the twenties may have had a considerable influence on him. Tadao Sato has noted that German Expressionist films influenced a number of Japanese films in the twenties and "stimulated the development of a domestic, everyday kind of realism"—the kind of realism Ozu would adopt for his films. *Currents in Japanese Cinema,* trans. Gregory Barrett (New York: 1982), p. 32.
3. Actually *Early Summer* also contains a cinematic joke clearly by the same mind that invented the *If I Had a Million* sequence in *Woman of Tokyo.* Noriko and her friend walk towards an upper room in a restaurant to catch a glimpse of the man Noriko might have married. Cut to the camera dollying down the corridor—not of the restaurant—but of Noriko's house, where a new scene begins. Richie calls the cut "simple sloppiness" (p. 112), which it clearly is not. Rather Ozu the tease is at work again. But his heart had gone out of such cinematic tricks, and he rarely used them in the post-1949 period.
4. *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema* (Berkeley: 1979), p. 160f.
5. "Yasujiro Ozu: Emotion and Contemplation," *Sight and Sound,* Winter 1978/79, p. 45.
6. The routines performed by Ozu's college boys at the slightest provocation recall Harold Lloyd's little dance step in *The Freshman* (1925). Lloyd appears to have been a favorite of Ozu's. In a lecture accompanying the screening of *Days of Youth,* Kristin Thompson argued convincingly for the influence of Lloyd on that film (New York: 17 December 1982). In addition a poster for a Lloyd film appears in the background of a still from the lost *I Graduated, But . . .* (see Richie, p. 206).
7. Sato, p. 34.
8. Akira Iwasaki, "Ozu and Japanese Film," *Kinema Jumpo,* special issue, 1964.
9. *The Munekata Sisters* and *A Hen in the Wind* are not available in the US. Of the 32 films housed in the US only 19 are in general distribution through New Yorker Films and Films, Inc. Two films owned by the Library of Congress and three by the University of Wisconsin are available under special circumstances. Those purchased by the Museum of Modern Art may be viewed on the premises.

Confessions of a Feminist Porn Programmer

KAREN JAEHNE

I hate confessions. Fortunately, *Film Quarterly* is not usually the forum for such breast-baring, but the subject of pornography invariably elicits the most personal responses, most of which are based on very little exposure to "porn," or burdened with the guilt that usually accompanies the deliberate search for pornography. To Scott MacDonald's observations [*FQ,* Spring 1983], I would like to add an equally tenuous feminist perspective—that of someone who watched all or part of some 192 porn films in the space of six months. It was not for cheap thrills; it was a 20-hour per week job selecting films for late-night cable TV's "adult" programming.

Definitions of pornography may become arcane in other contexts, but as a programmer, I had to develop pragmatic, operational distinctions between porno movies, skin flicks, erotica, and "double-duty" productions available in "hard" or "soft" versions. Whether other screeners and programmers have come to the same distinctions will remain a moot point, since very little research or even communication exists on the subject. "Porno" is the term for those "one-day wonders" with a strong emphasis on explicit sex acts, so that no matter how scratched the print may get, the audience will get off. Skin flicks, as the cute name implies, offer slightly more plot than genitalia and put clever disguises on porn; the plot remains, nevertheless, minimal. Behind erotica lies an abstract idea about sexuality: whereas the types named above are often action-oriented to the point of banality, the erotic film is self-conscious in using exhibitionism and explicit love-making to express a relationship more than skin-deep. "Double-duty" films exist in both a hard and soft version, the former for triple-X theaters, the latter for TV.

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pay-TV station did not advertise the job. They were looking for someone "to help" the director of programming, who had found the task of seeking and selecting porn all too time- and psyche-consuming. The station management was quite uncertain of what it was doing in this game, but everyone else in cable-land was staying afloat, it seemed, by offering late-night porn, so some dignified executive board must have voted in the "sleaze to please" (as we called it). However that decision was enacted, we in programming were faced with the responsibility of satisfying the approximately 80% of viewers who paid extra for the adult-film service, which came on after 11 o'clock in the evening and, on weekends, offered sometimes two adult films per night. Each month we had to find seven new skin flicks to supplement existing programming; the general ratio of films screened to films selected was six to one. We were also faced with the job of soothing the fears of the station president who knew how many of the board watched this programming nightly, and how many of them were also closely allied with the FCC. I was not informed who these people were or what was the nature of their interest; I was just told to respect their potential power, if I screwed up, so to speak. To further compound the difficulty, the programming staff was all female, and among them some feminists, albeit *sans* radical rhetoric.

Thus, I found myself in a room with a first-class Sony monitor and shelves upon shelves of cassettes, where porn sought me. I was told that I was "overqualified for the job, the very reason you got it." The station directed me to exercise caution in selecting types of "groupings," which I later found out meant "Oreo" (miscegenation) and "fag" (male homosexuality) sex. The limitations of pay-TV or cable broadcasting were clearly those of TV anywhere as far as porn went: it was a question of what you could get away with. Because Washington, D.C. is situated on the outer edge of the "Bible Belt," we had to listen to but tried to ignore the special interest groups like Morality in Media and WAP (Women Against Pornography), who were vociferously opposed to adult films on a "high penetration" (as it is truly called) medium.

"What kind of thing are you looking for?" I would ask.

"Whatever turns you on," came the always glib, cautious answer.

Paradoxically, the more I watched—and in turn, was watched—the more convinced I became that it was a job worth doing. Ten years after the sexual revolution, I had stumbled across the chance to turn on the nation's capital! And under a Republican administration! An assumption pervaded our office that conservatives would oppose porn films and liberals endorse them. But I discovered, as I slowly developed a public reputation as the station's "Night Life" scout, that many conservatives were especially interested in what they liked to call "erotic art." Of course, nobody but my colleagues—and that in jest! —wanted to admit that we were programming pornography. A recent article in *TV Guide* described the difference as merely semantic: "One man's porn is another man's erotica." Whether that is true of women as well is debatable. Most feminists have a hysterical reaction to the word pornography, and as my editor once said, "There is ordinarily an inverse relationship between the amount of porn people have seen and their willingness to take passionate positions about it." It does seem to be an issue that inspires great intolerance among liberals, most of whom consider themselves feminists.

I discovered three things which I intend to map out here as information for those who have not had my extensive if dubious opportunity to witness adult films. First, TV-soft core is definitely the new trend for pornography and the kind of FCC stipulations attempting to provide guidelines may or may not be respected by local cable stations. Without going into the tedious jargon which tries to remain nonspecific and requires concentrated interpretation on the part of programmers, the FCC provides signposts for programming but knows that the courts remain the watchdogs. Nobody in cable programming wants to provide the test case for the courts as to the suitability of late-night adult-films in their high-penetration medium. Although porn distributors often smirked at our particular caution and would inform me that another cable station in the Twin Cities area or Boston, or wherever, had taken a film

like *Urban Cowgirls* with all of its very explicit genitalia, we eschewed that film, in spite of its relatively high production values and good Country & Western music. Our motto was anything that would attract the attention of the FCC should not attract us. Ergo, I searched for soft-but-not-flaccid core. Soft-core is suggestive rather than explicit; it may show frontal nudity and even penises when non-erect, or at least not erect at anything greater than a 45-degree angle (yes, I often stopped the machine and measured). Insertion is forbidden and vaginal shots are very risky (preferably closed, if shown at all). There is a kind of air-brushed (what they used to do to pubic hair on the *Playboy* centerfolds) quality about soft-core which teases rather than instructs.

Secondly, every porn film seems to be aimed at a specific audience: gay, straight, *Hustler* mentality vs. *Playboy,* S & M, and fanciers of artsy erotica like Roger Vadim's work with Bardot or Sylvia Kristel. Distributors know the market well enough not to try to sell TV anything too hard, too kinky, or too cheap, so although I often received cassettes of a hard-X such as *Bourbon Street Girls* with its kinky cemetery sex scenes, the distributor immediately knew where I was coming from when I rejected it with some blunt comment about the risks of mind-fucking being perhaps greater than straight body-fucking. In another case of people indulging their wildest dreams amidst the ravages of apocalyptic events of WWIII, we deemed the motivation exploitative, despite the fact that the sex scenes were tastefully arranged and edited. There were many cases of objectionable sequences being edited out, because the movie was otherwise fine. If possible, we asked the distributor to edit it, and usually permission was granted for us to do whatever we wanted, the "artistic integrity" of such films being apparently at a minimum for most producers and distributors.

Thirdly, many quality films of an erotic nature were unsuitable for us precisely because they *did* have some arguable "socially or artistically redeeming value." When I was hired, the director of programming was eager to have what she called "classy classics." Nevertheless, films like *In the Realm of the Senses, I Am Curious Yellow, WR—Mysteries of the Organism,* the Bardot vehicles, or Pasolini films had too much message and used eroticism in the service of some other idea. Often films were nixed because they contained sadomasochistic sequences; and no matter how carefully done, no matter how psychologically sound the motivation, the classification "high-brow" eliminated them as potential programming. The erotica found at film festivals—for example, *I Love You* or *The Fruits of Passion*—elicited a flow of letters from our viewers asking for something simpler.

The station had unusually strict guidelines about violence. We were more "up-tight," I was told by distributors, than anyone else pandering to public prurience. (A measure of the nonviolence of our programming was the rejection of *Night of the Living Dead* for Halloween because of the trowel-murder scene.) The moment I saw something sharp coming at vulnerable flesh, I would hit the eject button or the fast-forward button in order to see if this was dispensable. If a violent sequence occurred in the first few minutes, it was likely that the film was full of sexploitation violence, and I would zip through it on fast-forward, which cut down the viewing time to about 20 minutes. I often ejected the film after 10 minutes of fast-forward viewing. Subsequently I would find ways of insulting distributors who kept sending us skin-flicks in the rape genre. We even X-cized scenes where hands were bound to bedposts or whenever sex looked like anything other than the delightful participation of two (or more) consenting adults.

The most controversial movie we faced was *The Italian Stallion* with Sylvester Stallone, which satisfied everybody's interest in his measurements. Stallone, however, whips a girl with a super-stud brutality unpalatable to anything but the sadomasochistic impulse. We were faced with the dilemma of whether to give the public what they wanted (to see Stallone's non-thespian dimensions) or to exercise the censorship that would bring this film into ideological alignment with our general programming. The fact that the film was available was surprising. It is a not very well-kept secret that many famous actors and actresses initiated movie careers in blue movies. In fact, some of the most famous can be seen in European X-rated cinemas, although their agents

made sure that these films were removed from American distribution in the interest of a commercial image. The story is told that when Stallone tried to buy up the rights after he was launched in *Rocky,* the distributor had raised the price on *Italian Stallion* so high that "Rocky" said, "Fuck it." Ultimately, we respected Stallone's own position on the film, realizing that if the questionable sequences were removed, it would lose its "potency."

Such reasoning often went into the discussion of the artistic erotica which incorporated sadomasochistic themes. I had to reject Terayama's *Fruits of Passion* with its astounding shots of Klaus Kinsky *rampant* because of its torture sequences. Such a film tries to appeal through the classic defense (legal as well as artistic) of "socially redeeming value," by which the distributor, and presumably the producer, means Terayama's Marxist dialectic between the potential for revolution in the streets and the metaphoric exploitation in the brothel. I distinctly remember that distributor's appeal to me as an intellectual film buff and his subsequent frustration that my presence could not influence our programming to include his misunderstood but beautiful film. Such discussions only increased my own awareness of how homogenized, pasteurized and antiseptic our offerings on the altars of Aphrodite actually were. On my own occasional excursions to the neighborhood art house to see the Brazilian national dish, Sonja Bragha, whose body I frankly admire and find beautiful without desiring to rape her (and I believe many men feel the same way), I appreciated all the more what could be done with erotica and how sex appeal could be translated into cinema without appealing to the limited interests of a traditional porn audience. It seemed to me that the more intellectually prudish cable TV became, the more justification (commercial as well as artistic!) the art house circuit would find for its own programming of erotica.

In fact, the whole issue of serious erotica revealed how shallow cable TV really is, because executives' fears of programming the great erotic films were redoubled by their fear of subtitles. There is, undoubtedly, an aura of seriousness surrounding anything with subtitles, which long offered a rationalization for using the art house circuit for sexy movies. The exoticism or sheer "otherness" of a foreign film provides a distancing factor, so that the audience does not feel confronted with a mere sex film. But because we were not looking for exotica or alienation in our erotica, we avoided many of the greatest examples of erotic cinema. To me, this was a disappointment which eventually created a disaffection with my job. The more I watched of healthy, happy, bouncy, blossoming, mindless sex, the more I felt the numbing effects of our capitalist endeavor. To show the subscribers (who presumably looked for bread and circuses) sex with ideas would be to encourage them to think, and thinking was presumed to be counter-productive.

After I made my own *de rigueur* research visit to a porn house (which I did without the protective influence of a male feminist porn-watcher), I came to understand the appeal of the seamy, raunchy, grainy, groping quality of those pornos. Their relationship to that elusive quality we call realism was stronger than that of our slick, amusing and rather smug "adult" films on late-night TV. I came to the conclusion that, paradoxically, the adults viewing late-night porn were probably a more appropriate audience for the cheap stuff, because they could escape back into their own comfortable lives, while the poor suckers in the raincoat brigade seeking escapism in the cinema were being subjected to odoriferous, depressing, more or less faked "come shots," which we eschewed, because they were not essential to getting turned on, only to getting off. It has been pointed out that we thus eliminated a *sine qua non* of the traditional porn formula, at least as far as men are concerned. We, however, considered our business "turning on," and only that far.

I had undoubtedly reached what is called by media psychologists the "satiation factor," which refers to audiences' staying away from whatever it is they are supposed to "hunger after." The satiation factor is the driving force toward sterner stuff, prompting programmers to seek harder porn as the months go by. There are, however, well-made and entertaining sex films available which are designed exactly for TV watchers: a movie called *What Are Those Naked Bodies Doing on My Television Set?* is an omnibus of four

segments spoofing existing prime-time programming; *Love You Florence Nightingale* is Marilyn Chambers's latest and softest X-capade; *1001 Erotic Nights* is an expensive adventure with a Scherezade nightly charming the blood-thirsty sheik with her tails; and *Never Too Deep* is a clever gesture of one-upswomanship toward Linda Lovelace. These are technically competent films made by people at least creative enough to figure out how to make the skin-flick formula work for them —sometimes by working against it.

The formula itself is simple. Within the first ten minutes a teaser that is strong enough to keep the audience for more: it can be a frustrated woman masturbating, or a couple trying to find a place to do it, or a man so enchanted by a female form that he follows her, and so forth. This foreplay must be consummated in the ten minutes after that, usually with a heterosexual duet. A few more variations on that lead to a *ménage à trois* or a lesbian scene, also followed by something a bit harder—swapping partners, or convincing the only virgin in the film to submit, or another ménage of a different hue (racial stereotypes are very popular). If the budget is big enough, an orgy scene occurs at some point, but just imagine the problems of producing an orgy. Porn director Arthur Bressan explained to me that pornography is fun to make because it is like opera—arias, solos, duets, figuring out how to bring in the chorus. Soft porn displays a curious affirmation of the couple—married or mated, in which the bottom line is that sex is more fun with your spouse. The most extreme example of this is in *Exposed,* where the hero is a porn star who has quit to marry, returns to his role to help out a friend, is caught by his wife, who joins him on the set for his greatest performance.

No matter how well the formula is managed, the key is casting. "Porn star" used to be a fairly degrading classification, but now British princes enjoy lost weekends with them and the category "sex symbol" has been expanded to embrace what they unashamedly offer, though there is little that is symbolic about these offerings. The difference between a sex symbol and a porn star used to be that the former was ever so lightly clad and simulated sex for major companies' commercial releases, while the latter did the real thing that went better with coke. The dynamic duo "sex and drugs" was assumed to dominate the porn industry, keeping women enslaved and addicted. Such charges can be found in *Not a Love Story* (the most pornographic piece of anti-porn I've ever watched). Porn actors, actresses and producers I've met are wont to laugh at this and express the conviction (or superstition?) that drugs interfere with on-set performance. It all sounds chillingly like legit film production, where drugs are known to have sent budgets sky-rocketing.

Some of the more stellar porn stars are celebrated in titillating magazine features, but many of them have fixed on careers in this genre and feel unthreatened by middle-class morality. Porn has its own stars, and many of those people are working hard to create their own kind of establishment. One actor who is charismatic and entertaining and more than head-and-shoulders above other porn actors is John Leslie. In interviews he admits to liking his work, considering it respectable and profitable—and immensely satisfying, so he has no intention of trying to sock his way into some studio system. Leslie is not glamorous, but he has "star quality," a filmland euphemism for intelligence. Another big male star is Eric Edwards, who often plays Leslie's buddy. He is better looking but bland. The biggest name is Harry Reems, recognized by people who have never seen a porn movie, perhaps, but he can't hold a candle to Leslie or Edwards. Sylvester Stallone comes in a weak fourth.

Besides Linda Lovelace and Marilyn Chambers, there is Sylvia Kristel (*Emmanuelle,* who is about to go into *Emmanuelle IV* in 3-D), a foreign star who has taken herself so seriously that in her most recent films she does only one sex scene—thereby rendering them unsatisfactory for TV's expectations. My favorite "actress" turned out to be a dark-haired, lanky, savvy-looking lady named Annette Haven, who appears in innumerable American adult movies; her name is some kind of guarantee, because she brings a sense of irony to what she is doing and moves gracefully. The new European sex star is Brigita Laihey, a blonde bomb who starred in many sizzling films there but went right into the stratosphere after a British production called *Erotica,* a lavish production with caba-

ret numbers by the Paul Ramond Revue in London. Reliable work horses of the industry are women like Veronica Hart, Georgina Spelvin, and Misty Rowe. These women get from $100 up to $250 per day's work, and many of them have hopes of developing careers in Hollywood. Loni Sanders has the right combination of looks and mannerisms to go legit in something like "Charley's Angels."

It becomes quickly apparent that few of these performers could straddle the DMZ between Hollywood's erotica and their porn training grounds. Many remember Carol Conners as the buxom blonde of The Gong Show and will think she found her natural role in *Candy* and its sequel *Candy Goes to Hollywood,* where she becomes an interesting parody of her "real" self from "The Dong Show." In these two films there is more Mack Sennett than porn, although porn is the excuse for the production. Moving in the other direction, Misty Rowe made an appearance as a more-or-less draped secretary in *The Man with Bogart's Face. Caligula* totally confused any distinction between exploitation movies *with* stars and exploitation movies *without.*

Auteurism has not yet been applied to porn, but, as compulsive as I am, I began noting stylistic trends of directors like Henry Paris (reportedly a pseudonym), Gail Palmer and Roberta Findlay. The latter two particularly interested me, because as women they provided testing grounds for the theory that feminist porn could and would be different. Generally speaking, I observed a reverse syndrome —what I call "feminismo," although women are not shown physically brutalizing men (which I would consider a masochistic male fantasy anyway). Mainly, men are used or utilized as sex objects. In *Playgirl,* a woman promoter launches, loves and leaves her men; after a romp through the various worlds of the New York art scene, the publishing business, and the pop music industry with the respective protegés, she returns each time to her husband. Its director, Roberta Findlay, began as an avant-garde film-maker in the sixties and says she can't see that much difference between what she did then and what she's doing now, except that she has bigger budgets and people seem to want to see what she makes. As an afterthought, she added, "Feminism will always be the cultural front."

I seriously mulled over her pronouncement for months until I decided that *eroticism* will always be the cultural front where sexual power struggles and social evolution are thrown into relief. What most anti-porn feminists challenge is the exploitation of the female body as a symbol, claiming it inspires, aids and abets actual exploitation. I think this shows a curious leap of faith in porn, which is clearly a shallow and casual art form. Such feminists reflect the mentality of a victim of de Sade, whereas pornography's image is changing through the TV outlet to be more and more X-rated versions of *Adam's Rib.* Attempts to cast the male form as a cultural symbol have been attributed to the gay front. And charges of exploitation of the female form in advertising only confuse the issue because erotic films are not displaying women's wares in order to sell something else. Eroticism for its own sake does seem to reflect on what is going on in the bedrooms of a nation. The sexually aggressive women in these films reflect, at the very least, the increased expectations of women to get what they want by going after it. It can be argued that sexually "aggressive" women were always a male fantasy; however, the new image of women shows them rejecting the men they don't like, as well as seducing the attractive ones. The idea of choice has been introduced for the female protagonists; and many of them prefer other females—to the exclusion of men, it must be added, lest the old argument come back about lesbianism feeding men's fantasies. Still, I would dare to predict that the backlash against pornography on television may well rise from the male sector, when they begin to fear their own wives watching this and subsequently acting on it, for their psychological assumption remains that women do such things with "other" men.

Obviously the fantasy element reigns over the genre and remains one of the rationalizations for its existence: "It's just fantasy." Anyone who knows much about the filmmaking process, however, may find the most interesting type of porn that of the self-reflective films like *Let's Make a Porn Movie* or *Exposed* with their self-caricature. As funny and self-revealing as these films were, they reminded me unpleasantly of the awkward

nature of performance in a porn movie. Keeping the sexuality, not to mention the organs, tuned and ready during the tedium of lighting adjustments, lens focusing, continuity checks, and MOS (mit out sound) (sic) directorial guidance implies a nadir of spontaneity. And yet, for porn to be erotic, it must be believable. There can be no room for credibility gaps, if it's to be good. For the same reason, the violence or potential for brutality exasperated me as I imagined some woman being thrown around yet again on take 4 (the supposed maximum number of takes budgeted for porn).

The actual increase in fantasy and decrease in brutality in adult movies has been found to be in a direct relationship to the increase in female viewers. Not only did we operate on the information supplied by our customer surveys that over 60% of our viewers were female, but the Playboy Channel is on record as tailoring its product to and programming for what is believed to be a dominantly female home audience. In an article in *American Film* (March, 1982), Jean Callahan reported that most programming services of adult movies now take women's sensibilities into account. One immediate observation was that women preferred less fragmented shots of sexual acts (fewer shots of isolated genitalia), slow rhythms in the editing of such sequences, and legitimate motivation for erotic relationships (obviously rape was eliminated as a "legitimate" motivation). To the programmers, it also meant incorporating more plot-oriented, complex films with an emphasis on the male/female erotic relationship as a cause for sexual contact. As soap operas have become more sexually liberated, so pornography has become more lathered with psychological problems. An entire type of porn film is, in fact, about marital problems being solved by developing a healthier attitude toward marital sex.

Soft-core porn can also be used as a barometer of cultural change in another way: by viewing the parodies of hit movies in this genre, which invariably seem to substitute female protagonists in the James Bond, sheriff, private-eye, doctor, promoter, publisher or race-car driver roles—a notable shift from the traditional porn-movie roles for women as prostitutes, secretaries, frustrated wives, actresses or models. In the last decade the genre has shifted with the rest of the film industry toward space fantasy and science fiction, beginning with *Flesh Gordon* and reaching a hilarious peak in *Trashi.* C & W romps pre-dated *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* by about five years; the call-girl stories make *Klute* look reactionary. A favorite genre about the *Barry Lyndon* or *Tess* era is the "quill pen" melodrama with eighteenth-century historical "friction." *Young Lady Chatterly, Mistress Pamela, Joseph Andrews* and a fascinatingly funny *Autobiography of a Flea* offer frocks and frills, high bosoms and thrills of other times and places. No matter how erotic the era or locale, it boils down to the same objective and the same thing gets shown in all times and even more places.

It may be the "sameness" of it all that, in fact, inspires erotica. A romp through new and nubile bodies has been the prerogative of men for centuries, but as women are beginning to express a low threshhold for boredom, cable TV is offering an entire line-up of erotic fare. Women are definitely the target for what I call the ERA-influenced programs: male strippers and men modeling or weight lifting. *Men at Work* sums it up succinctly and stylishly in a handsome parade of prowess. In a way, it is also somewhat old-fashioned in its serial presentation, almost like burlesque. More traditional burlesque seems to be aimed at both sexes, with a certain appeal to women who wonder what it is like to be a sex-object; or, at least the information seems to be in excess of what a man might want to know. Thus the good old-fashioned girls of *Miss World Burlesque* are evolving into contestants seeking more lucrative gratification than applause in things like *So You Want to be a Centerfold?* and *Penthouse Pet of the Year,* with their *Playboy* style documentary approach.

My over-exposure to porn ultimately raised more questions in my own mind than I can address in a single article, or can be answered either by the confessions of Scott MacDonald or the thundering of *The Village Voice* about *Not a Love Story.* My "report from the field" does not seek to answer them all, but merely to offer some observations and directions from first-hand experience. While engaged in this enterprise at the station, I was often visited by my curious colleagues who, to my

surprise, seemed prompted by the vista of thumping thighs on the monitor to offer confessions of their own. Ultimately, they would also ask me why or how I could do this job, and I, in turn, asked them what they thought my motivations were. I kept notes and, of a cross-section of some 50 administrators, clerks, salespeople, and ad executives, and their secretaries, I received answers that I categorized in the following way and present here in their order of popularity. (I presume they are projections on to me by my colleagues.)

1. Like Chauncey Gardner, I "like to watch."
2. I want people to enjoy cheaper, more private, less threatening thrills (most popular with women).
3. Censoring sex is a power-trip, not unlike castration (which split the male vote with #1 above).
4. Carnal knowledge is just another branch of epistemology (my suggestion, which attracted four women).

I believe this list, however flippantly formulated, reveals several of the issues and layers of meaning in our reactions to porn films in their various guises. Beyond the sheer voyeurism made possible by skin flicks (beyond "being there") lies a healthy, unneurotic, unthreatening option for viewers: late-night cable or pay-TV, which is "used," according to Callahan's article, by couples and affords the privacy to carry through on the suggestive nature of porn. Meanwhile, the dangers of over-reacting to the idea of pornography lead to accusations and counter-accusations among feminists, as Ruby Rich has warned; feminism ought to be able to discuss the issues of pornography without dismissing the importance of sexuality. In fact, it ought to take a revealing peek at its own image through the eyes of female porn directors, who often consider themselves feminists. The many concomitant issues surrounding female sexuality must be addressed separately from the soft-core cable-TV image. (But can we toss out the baby without the bathwater?)

Ultimately, I hope that we can simply learn more about human sexuality and the cinema; perhaps self-knowledge and cinema knowledge intersect here.

Reviews

DEATH WATCH

Director: Bertrand Tavernier. Script: David Rayfiel and Tavernier. Camera: Pierre-William Glenn. Music: Antoinie Duhamel. Quartet Films.

Bertrand Tavernier's first English-language film, *Death Watch,* seems haunted by a contradiction. This movie about the scandalous mass appeal of a woman's death on national television has been an unusually long time in finding American distribution and has not met with more than limited attention from even art house audiences. Yet its own premises can account for this. The videotaped realism of death, perversely certified by a voyeuristic transmission of that most private of moments, might well be universally riveting. On the other hand, the cinematic critique of such video pandering, in an ironic narrative parable that renders this long dying in a manner both distanced and incriminating, punishes the very motives that might invite popular attendance. The seductions of melodrama turn to satiric "metadrama" right before our eyes. *Death Watch,* in short, is a fiction downbeat and eminently resistible, whereas the TV docudrama it foresees in some future state would have the savor of forbidden access to the "real thing."

Death Watch is based on David Compton's novel *The Continuous Katherine Mortenhoe,* whose title suggests, beyond the double graveyard pun of the heroine's last name, the usurping of her continuous presence by sheer video image. The movie tracks the heroine, played by Romy Schneider in the last film she was to make before her own death, from the disclosure of her fatal illness through her flight from both TV crews and police to her eventual death, as far removed as she can get from the technologized metropolis of this all too near future. The intrusive attempts to televise the last days of her poignant story are transformed, for us as well as the TV audience, to the furious escape scenes of an overheated thriller—for even in her evasive actions she is being secretly

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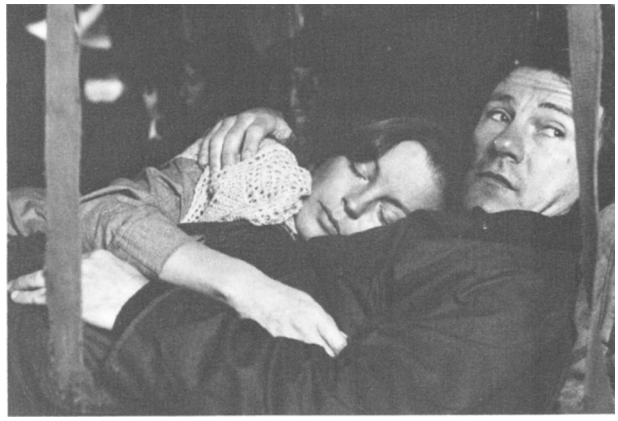
filmed. Further compounding in this way the plot's conscious generic melange, Katherine is accompanied all the while by Harvey Keitel as the incognito cameraman Roddy, representative from yet another genre: a partly automated agent straight out of cautionary science fiction, an undercover journalist with a robotized photographic eye.

When Roddy the camera/man is arrested at one point for slugging a policeman in a street brawl, this *agent photographeur* who cannot help but record what he sees is aptly detained in a jailhouse whose outer wall is decorated with a huge poster for the NTV melodrama "Death Watch" which he has been surreptitiously filming with his implanted camera—the prison of his gaze indeed. The technicians monitoring the broadcast in the studio joke that, though it may no longer be the tear-jerking serial "Death Watch," at least it resembles the old series "Highway Patrol." All spontaneous events must be coerced to a narrative formula. The movie that we, not they, are watching thereby enfolds one among many inquiries into its own generic alternatives. Heralded or not, *Death Watch* arrives as one of the most subtle and persuasive studies in recent years of movie genres as moral categories, their capacity for mutation and mutilation, their abrasion and debate with adjacent genres in film and fiction. The movie thereby claims as its largest subject the whole need of narrative, both the imperatives of form and the risks of its future imperilling.

Yet such a skeptical study of genre, rather than a wholehearted instance of one, is likely to disorient or even annoy the viewer. The danger of impurity, not to mention parody, becomes abundantly clear in the most extended notice in English I have seen of the movie, from the *British Film Institute Monthly Bulletin,* March 1981. Richard Combs seems to miss the polemical edge of the entire narrative when, after enjoying the graveyard opening, he regrets that the film did not "develop its rather gleefully macabre atmosphere in any one of a number of possible genres: horror, mystery, fantasy." The crippling flaw in *Death Watch,* though only as the genre picture it has every aversion to becoming, appears on this reading to be that Tavernier is "unwilling to let his science fiction get in the way of his humanism. . . ." That unwillingness, it



DEATH WATCH: *Romy Schneider, Harvey Keitel*

should soon become apparent, emerges as an organizing theme of the entire film, a theme sustained by every aspect of his understated style.

It is exactly on the stylistic grounds of such discreet lyric realism, discretely pieced together with unassertive editing, that the curious, the inquisitorial drama of converging genres in *Death Watch* is played out. Tavernier's unmannered mode of filming does quiet battle with any preset generic expectations that would unbalance his film's implied attitude of receptive poise. If style within generic narrative can be defined as that ceaseless transaction between formula and individual effect by which any originality must be negotiated, then this definition is bound to take unusually problematic shape in a film whose every stylistic move is designed in dialectical tension with the defective or defunct genres from which these moves are meant to ease the film free. All genres, including science fiction and melodrama, tend to be too full of themselves, overcoded. Tavernier wants to suggest a technique more genuinely attentive and so more tentative, exploratory, a style alert to suggestions it has no need to make overt. With the muted clarity of its placid, saturated colors, Tavernier's camerawork would have us respond to a style of slow patient "takes" that seem just that—detached and detachable receptions of the world as it passes. The sharply demarcated cuts between them (dissolves are rare) indicate not the seams of a temporally articulated *text* so much as the world's natural spaces and objects delivering themselves up seriatim to the impassively recording lens. Though we may doubt that any one fabricated film discourse can obey the independent reality of the world more than any other, the rhythm and weight of

Tavernier's images want at least to keep this possibility open.

This is the very motive that refers Tavernier's work back to another loosely used generic label often set at odds with the classical Hollywood product. For *Death Watch* is from first to last a European "art film" in its most familiar key, cerebral and oblique, elliptical, readied for interpretation but resistant too, often staunchly tacit. The art film tends to sophisticate plot crux in the direction of psychological crisis, introvert its turning points, placate the demands of climactic action with interpretive recognitions rather than narrative reversals and revelations, finesse a sort of closure that does not answer so much as fine tune one last time the questions generated by plot. Less fastened to coercive generic forms, or in the case of a film like *Death Watch* deliberately courting such formulas in order to break their shackles, the conventional "art film" is more flexible and eclectic than the mainstream Hollywood narrative.

The first three brief scenes of Tavernier's film set up a stylistic as well as thematic matrix for approaches that will gauge both its psychological drama and its aesthetic argument. There is an initial upward crane shot (often used later to release the viewer from the confined, claustrophobic, or visually occluded locus of the protagonists), then a long-held unflinching close-up, then a slow, deliberated tracking shot. We open with the first of these shots in an old cemetery, where a young girl whose face we never see, but whose red hair anticipates the heroine's, is found skipping rope among the ornate cenotaphs and mausoleums. As the camera slowly lifts above this cramped mortuary space, we come into full view of the gables, towers, and smokestacks of a large city (Glasgow, under ominous skies, serving perfectly for a future steeped in an eroded and enervated past). As the stark obelisks of the cemetery are aligned in this continuous upward sweep with the steeples of the city, the vertical line of camera movement has made its own rhetorical point. We have risen from the dead past into the postmodern necropolis.

The scene cuts directly to a close-up of a face hidden in shadow except for a luminous spot on one of its eyes. We have moved to an advanced scientific laboratory or hospital room where Keitel as Roddy is undergoing final tests of the miniature video camera installed behind his retina. The film's initial transition is thus an instance of "ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny," the germinating plot putting itself through its own generic metamorphosis from the graveyard setting of earlier gothic narratives to their macabre technological update in foreboding science fiction. Roddy is the futuristic Frankenstein's monster, a man made up of parts to improve on the human condition. We see no doctors or nurses in this scene, no decor to situate us, only Keitel's face scrutinized in medium close-up. This is the inner limit, as it were, of Tavernier's camera placement, a close-up neither gargantuan nor figurative for some unimpeded access to psyche, a shot respectful of otherness. Yet by the manner in which the shot does move in tightly enough to mask out the other characters in the scene, there is a resistant hint in this bizarre solipsistic experiment—Roddy's eye the focal point of the whole transient world—that the world beyond him is not yet ready to be received and recorded. When it must submit, it will be transcribed by the monocular vision—two-dimensional, depthless, superficial—of the camera lens his eye has become.

Leaving this second scene for the third, the camera tracks gradually toward an exterior balustrade in a disembodied shot, unattached as yet to plot or character, that clarifies itself only when Roddy moves slowly into frame from the offscreen space behind the camera along roughly our line of sight. In what comes very near to a subjective shot, the camera has thus approximated his angle of vision and his rate of progress. By entering into the frame, the protagonist seems in this way to have supplanted and expropriated the camera's function, become indeed its surrogate as his new eye uniquely empowers him to do. What this momentarily unsettling tracking shot further intimates is that the film *Death Watch* as a whole will have to work out in all its complicities and moral complications—indeed work out of its own aesthetic system—the latent danger of the protagonist's facile and invasive eye becoming a proxy for the film's own camera.

This passing vertigo of perspective places us on alert from now on. We can never rest easy

in the implicit separation of powers between the inquisitive directorial eye and that of the questionable protagonist. When a nurse joins Roddy at the balcony to ask him why in the world he has let them do this to him, he answers with a smile, "So I'll never forget how pretty you are," and her face is instantly transferred from our celluloid view to a grainier video image filling the screen, and then to a wall of monitors in the television studio. Again and again the scene in which we find Roddy is intercut with its reception and transmission elsewhere, doubled and multiplied, thinned to triviality. Tavernier's film, within which such images are repeatedly regurgitated, must not only lay claim to the primacy of its finer vision but strenuously defend that claim.

What can hardly be overstressed is that Roddy's craving to engrave the world in moving pictures is in no danger of being lightly, even if decidedly, dismissed by a film whose style derives from roughly the same motives. Tavernier's passively receptive images are often composed like Roddy's without undue geometry, naturalistically lit without melodramatic highlighting, shot for the most part from eye level, and minimally edited by clean cuts without all those encoded temporal transitions of the lap dissolve so central to the classic Hollywood text. Underlying all Roddy's ambitions is thus the photojournalistic impulse at the root of Tavernier's own conspicuously distanced, uninsistent style. The difference is mainly that Roddy's avidity for images has become not just passionate but involuntary, mechanized. Yet for all his catastrophic misunderstanding of the photographer's genuine relation to the world as object, nevertheless Roddy does revere the inherent magic of the image no less than Tavernier. Roddy is, after all, the one who immediately knows the name, when asked, of a noted still photographer who (like the present film's director in his lowering, squalid, but obviously exquisite cityscapes) has the gift for making "poor children in dark streets look beautiful." As with Tavernier, Roddy's own photographic impulse is not toward glamor or transfiguration, but rather toward the ravishment of the actual. But Tavernier, having a story to construct rather than merely a preexistent world to reproduce, manages as narrative artist—and in the process as *metteur en scène,* not just cinematographer—to incorporate the world as filmic object within his encompassing aesthetic subject.

The automated eye, however, must always keep the world at the focal length of aesthetic or journalistic distance. A technologically dis-placed person, Roddy cannot allow himself to make love to his own estranged wife at one point, for fear that his producer will be leering at them through the cameraman's own electronic gaze. On the other hand, Roddy seems to approach genuine feeling for his photographed subject, Katherine Mortenhoe, only when he catches his own rerun footage on television in a rural pub. Here for the first time he cries. Yet here too he is filming, if blurrily, what he sees, in a potentially infinite regress of the already seen, the secondary.

These ironies of electronic visual mediation are inseparable from the critique of technological escalation at large in the film's prophesied future—and the correspondent atrophy of all narrative impulse. The urge for storytelling, however vestigial, is audibly present in the intermittent voiceover of Roddy's alienated wife and her "estranging" frame narrative, within whose tentative retrospect the film's satire takes shape. Yet the coherent shape of narrative has been made increasingly difficult to activate within a given life. In the homogenized routine of the society predicted and ominously depicted in *Death Watch,* where science no longer "lets" people die of "ulcers, cancer, or madness," death is an escape possible only by a rage against the status quo, a will to the final violence of individuation. Dying becomes the desire to see one's story through to completion, to take narrative command of one's own plot. It is therefore exactly right that Katherine should be by profession a computer "novelist"—the operator of a fiction-spinning machine named "Harriet" that disgorges formulaic pulp romances, automatically rejecting plot twists and sentimental endings that have been used before. At one point she blows her own fuse before her computer when it "negatives" one after another of her favored conclusions to a novel in progress. She soon feels a tentative victory, however, when, as if anticipating the emotional nakedness of her pending death at the seashore, she comes up with an original

finish: "Amy, alone on beach, appears nude, watching." The computer's "Affirmative" says more than the machine knows. Yet Katherine recognizes that hers is a small victory if she cannot achieve it in the termination of her own life as well as in the terminal of her computer. "Aren't many ways out any more," she tells Roddy by analogy with her own degenerated craft, and then must explain herself: "You know, those things they used to write novels about." The climactic death scene has gone the way of the fiction whose themes it used to help consolidate and charge with meaning. It has been either sanitized or repressed. Heir of tragedy, residual legatee at least of its formal confidence, even melodrama has run dry, lost the sense of an end in preparation. It is Tavernier's crisis too. As an essaying of the still possible in the making of any plot, *Death Watch* translates the future shock it renders to the contemporary debate about narrative options it serves to address.

Attempting to justify himself later to Roddy's estranged wife, the "Death Watch" producer with the funereal name Ferriman (played with snivelling fitness by Harvey Dean Stanton)—a futuristic Charon who would pilot the dying to their otherworld in the mass media—says that after years of unholy silence about the process of death, he "wants to bring the dying home" to the television audience. Roddy's wife is not fooled, however, answering back that this attitude has sold short both reality and tragedy, debasing them to mere soap opera. Such domestication is a generic crime against the true power of melodrama, not to mention tragedy. When Roddy himself seems to have realized this, he goes blind rather than persist in his hypocrisy and violation. There is a cut at this point to the technological extermination scene in the studio, where all the monitors at once pass through the death rattle of their static interference to absolute blankness; the containing drama of *Death Watch,* choosing to continue with its own story, must now recuperate its very justification from all this preceding critique.

How is Tavernier's film able to retrain and maintain its gaze without falling victim to either extreme of its potential generic overdetermination—monitory science fiction on the one hand, hyperbolic melodrama on the other, mere dystopian nightmare versus soap opera? *Death Watch* achieves this by eschewing the ruses of documentary truth and admitting to the need for aesthetic mediation, formal comprehension, on the subject of death. Fiction graces dying, that ultimate form of inevitability, with the inner inevitabilities of form. The soap opera "Death Watch" is aimless and uninflected, except by chance. It is hardly a cathartic encounter with death, but rather its mass travesty, life infiltrated by the apparatus but scarcely the gift for storytelling. As a pseudo-documentary cooption of life's most unassailable privacy, "Death Watch" is a sacrificial enactment before no gods but those of publicity. It is a national show but in no sense a social act, certainly not a communal rite, for it has no ritual form. No sustained drawing out and working through of pity and terror, it is only a terrible pity gone public. "Death Watch" stands confessed, finally, not as the healing spectacle of tragic or cathartic death, but rather as the very death scene of authentic spectacle.

And it is even worse than that. Only after Katherine arrives at the seaside home of her former husband, played by Max Von Sydow with the full aura of those introverted psychological allegories of Ingmar Bergman with which he is most closely associated, do we realize that the heroine has not been dying of natural causes after all. The producer Ferriman has in fact precipitated her illness with toxic medication (this exposition is truncated and botched in some American prints of the film), intending to reverse her symptoms for a rousing *coup de théâtre* late in the serial broadcast. The whole course of the plot, save for its coming rescue by the desperate remedy of suicide, is therefore one long contrived cliff-hanger, paced toward its intended peripety and upbeat close. Its heroine is now seen, if only by her death, to free herself from someone else's shoddy melodrama into her own tragedy.

Yet the cinematic treatment of this release must be chastened by the restraint for which the style of Tavernier's entire film has been an implicit argument. Further, the film must exonerate the voyeurism that has brought us to this point, made us privy to the same fatality purveyed by the serial "Death Watch." In the culminating intersection of its two chief genres, dystopian science fiction and melo-

drama, the anti-technological touchstone of the former checks and rectifies the excesses of the latter. In the case of Tavernier's conclusion, the admonitions against coercive gimmickry in the manipulative programming of "Death Watch" drive his climactic scene entirely off the screen.

At this turn of the plot, Katherine's ex-husband Gerald becomes the implicit spokesman for the film that gives him voice. Sympathizing with Katherine's willful insistence on a dramatically heightened death, the movie nevertheless sides with the other voice of its long-standing dialogue with its own aesthetic choices. Gerald imagines a pride of lions on the edge of the savannah, just fed, their predatory instincts in abeyance, merely watching the other animal life around them as the wind blows the grass against their bodies. "That's all." Determined that "not everything has to mean something," he adds, in a comment reverberating with aesthetic implications for Tavernier's own style and psychology: "People who live as if more is going on are dramatizing their lives. They're liars." Dismissed here is exactly that self-serving melodrama of identity that *Death Watch* is out to detect, arrest, and cleanse. After all the automated watching in this film, all the scrutinizing and reduplicating of the world for use in narrative, here is the visible universe rid of its need for secret meaning. Like Gerald, the film's own style aspires to conceive a world of relaxed essence rather than anxious sense. In Katherine's last words, before asking Gerald to leave her to the results of her overdose, she too seems to have contracted his contagious desire for a dose of unmediated being, reality freed from the theater of meaning: "And let the wind blow the grass," she trails off in this final moment of groggy grace, "and let the wind blow the grass. . . ."

Yet if Gerald is speaking for Tavernier in his rejection of people who "dramatize" their days, why then isn't photojournalism the antidote, the prescribed cinematic alternative? The answer must lie in the fact that Roddy's brand of pseudo-objective shooting is not just life let be, but lives read even as they are led. Once any film opens experience to secondary reception, or stages its representation, that film cannot abdicate from the ordering, even if from the inordinately forced, interventions of art. *Mise en scène* is, after all, premised on people and things not just seen but *placed.* It is therefore the central paradox—and if too complacently served up, the pitfall—of the tradition of lyric realism within which Tavernier works that its lucid neutrality is an illusion well under control.

Katherine had earlier told the director of "Death Watch" contemptuously that in the world of television "everything is of interest, but nothing matters." Between this devaluation of meaning and the inflated mattering of over-theatricalized gestures lies this film's ethical and aesthetic ideal. The elliptically treated death scene—the absence that is death spelled out only as plot's respectful hiatus—arrives by way of illustration. After two hours of anticipation, the death scene bypasses representation altogether. This is the final homage to Katherine's integrity, her victory. She has asked to hear a symphonic tape of Gerald's while she drifts off to unconsciousness. As if the film is aware of the etymological origins of melo/drama in musically accompanied theatrical spectacle, it sets up this "staged" and "scored" death only to veer away in last-minute validation of its privacy.

When Gerald in the very next scene comes out on the lawn to announce Katherine's death, "a few minutes ago," to the blind Roddy, there is a jolting cut, like a recoiling reaction shot on the part of omniscience itself. The heroine's dying entirely elided, the film is ready for perhaps an even more telling reticence—formal closure as a sacrificial cancellation of its own visual access, the end of its own "continuousness" as representation. The film's last shot, a precipitous freeze frame in mid-dialogue, creates an unprecedented break with the smoothness of the movie's narrative, not just punctuating it but rupturing its very presuppositions as visual enactment. One failed husband wants to introduce his wife to another, to fill the vacuum of Katherine's death. The blind Roddy, no longer able to see the body of his wife, who has arrived with TV crew, knowing her only by touch, gestures toward a renewed hold on her feeling by naming her to another, both as herself and as his. Roddy's last line, and the film's—"I'd like you to meet my wife, Tracy"—turns the generic tables one last time to invoke the marital finality of comic form as

a triumph hard-won from its own ruins. Nicknamed "Trace" throughout the film, as if she too were merely a visual insignia of presence for the camera addict, the wife Tracy is returned at last to her autonomy, while also introduced as part of Roddy's felt life.

The story is not suddenly and willfully drawn closed at this point; it has merely withdrawn from the reach of the motion picture eye. Such is the film's final decorum to honor its own critique and give up the gaze in this way. The suspect melodrama of a theatricalized life is thus repaired by the two stages of this cinematic termination: the deleted death scene and the deflected action just past the arresting point of closure. The climax of the plot is precisely what we have not been permitted to see; its implication, confirmed again by this stop-action dénouement, is that beyond a certain limit we should not need or expect to. Struck still, held in wait for what may be coming but will remain impervious to spectacle, even to his own vision, this renewed hero and his wife escape from plot, like Katherine before them, without being betrayed by its public representations. Some things in this movie, to paraphrase the heroine, matter too much to be of further interest.

Down to the last halted frame, then, *Death Watch* strives for a technique charged with a whole range of implied meanings it need not insistently discharge. Style is thus liberated to a freer play of expression—as well as a deeper burden of originality. To earn that freedom from scene to scene, Tavernier's film feels bound to weigh this burden *against* (in the sense of both touchstone and antagonism) the various demands of generic alternatives. By invoking only in the long run to revoke just such narrative expectations as those engendered by science fiction, say, or by melodrama and soap opera, Tavernier's style can resonate off even while dampening the too often strident tones of each.

So that what *Death Watch* is finally about is how it has managed to come about in the first place, what stylistic alliances it has had to decline, what habits adopt and adapt. The film has obligated itself by its own narrative and visual caveats to forge new and unordained ways of assuring overall form without local distortion, structure with the minimum of exaggeration, style without predictable stylization. *Death Watch* thus becomes an ironic elegy for the same strained modes of watching the world it has taken up with in order to do in. Only in this way could what we must call the thematics of style in this film—and, yes, the reflexive *melodrama* of competing and depleted genres—justify our attention. Only in this way could the movie hope to establish a visual practice, a style, that is compatible with meaning while not insatiable for it. —GARRETT STEWART

FANNY AND ALEXANDER

Director: Ingmar Bergman. Script: Bergman. Cinematography: Sven Nykvist. Editing: Sylvia Ingemarsson. Embassy Pictures.

One doesn't want to believe Bergman when he informs us that *Fanny and Alexander* is his last film—after all these years of emotionally and intellectually stirring work, steadily produced. We've spent a whole adult lifetime in his company—or struggling with friends who fiercely rejected him: those who don't like films which so obsessively take dark journeys into the deepest part of the psyche and can be unrelenting in their anguish, or political friends who grumble about the privilege of the world he describes (in this film more than ever) and who scorn such "self-indulgent" "bourgeois" themes as anxiety over death and the passage of time, the lack of larger cosmic meaning, the failure of parents towards children, and the ravages of lovelessness. It's hard to think of other directors who have elicited such extreme critical responses: from those who see him as a cinematic Dostoyevsky or Shakespeare (actually, he's never seemed more Shakespearean than in this film, and Shakespeare was clearly on his mind as he made it) to those who dismiss him as too literary, too linked to high culture.

Our usual experience, however, has been to come away from each new Bergman film with the feeling of a rich gift given. There has been a harrowing of hell, but also a rehealing on a more profound level. Some of us date our adult love affair with film to the time we stumbled out of *The Seventh Seal* with a bewildered, stunned sense of something enormous altered in our world. Or we remember leaving *Persona* shaking, because of the

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Erland Josephson and Gunn Wallgren in Bergman's FANNY AND ALEXANDER

simultaneously complex and primal truths about identity and relationships which the film powerfully conveyed. It's difficult to summarize all the intertwinings of our lives with his work—and it's equally painful to face the loss of Bergman from the screen.

If it's hard to imagine ourselves doing without his films, it's even more difficult to conceive of Bergman himself doing without them. One hopes he will relent and decide that he must start again, a small film for television, perhaps. But there is no denying the valedictory atmosphere of *Fanny and Alexander*—a lush, sprawling, glowing work, running over three hours (there is a five-hour Swedish television version), centered around the upper-middle-class Ekdahl family—the widowed matriarch, Helena (Gunn Wallgren), her three sons and their wives, and two of the grandchildren, Fanny and Alexander. Along with its references to *Hamlet,* there is something of *The Tempest* about the film: the magician Prospero coming before us one last time to announce that our revels now are ended, and to send his fairies away (or pack up his puppets). So the young boy Alexander's actor/theater-manager father, Oscar (Allan Edwall), solemnly and lovingly looks one final time at his little theater, after twenty-two years with it, and in one of the film's most resonant moments tells us, haltingly because he is so full of emotion, that the theater can serve as a little world which helps illuminate the great one, and can also at the least provide a moment's escape from the outside world's harshness. (So too Bergman places Gunnar Björnstrand, one of his major actors over the years, among the acting company in this film, looking painfully old and frail, and has Gustav, another of the brothers, give him a fond kiss at the final family feast table, as he pays homage to artists.)

It's clearly Bergman who is speaking through Oscar's wan, exhausted, ineffectual persona —just as Oscar's brothers carry other strains of the complex, divided Bergman self. Gustav Adolf (Jarl Kulle) is a good-natured, pleasure-loving restauranteur who lunges at all the young maidservants, and is indulged by wife and family. He is an innocent, somewhat foolish priapian figure, who is conscious of his aging body and his need to prove his sexual prowess. The third brother, Carl, a professor who rends himself both for being second-rate and for being mortal, is the self-tormented figure of the three—a drunk, an insomniac, a debtor.

As the three brothers represent a composite male protagonist, so the imaginative, sensitive ten-year-old Alexander (Bertil Guve), who has an extraordinary clear-eyed intelligent beauty, suggests the young Bergman, as he avidly plays with his magic lantern and slides, and his toy theater. (This despite Bergman's deny-

ing the connection in interviews: "He's a young nobleman. I was just a worm!") It's Alexander's point of view which is central to the film, though at times the world is seen through an objective camera eye and at others from the perspective of Emilie, Alexander's handsome, warm actress-mother (Ewa Froling). These different points of view create a sensuously textured world, inhabited by more joy, life energy, humor, and sense of community than exist in any other of Bergman's recent films. But that is not to say that the film is a simple homage to a sweet harmonious existence. Evil exists here too, as does guilt, death anxiety, and a profound sense of failure. However, no single emotion, mood, or theme is preeminent in this film—by contrast *Autumn Sonata* or *From the Life of the Marionettes* were dark, single-minded, pared-down chamber works, ravaged by anguish and violence. *Fanny and Alexander* is bountiful, inclusive, extraordinarily festive, an unhurried summation of Bergman's obsessions, images and themes over the last 40 years.

From its opening scenes it conveys a feeling of high spirits, of light and of celebration. At the beginning, all of the Ekdahl family meet to celebrate Christmas in the sumptuous, warm rooms of Alexander's grandmother. The apartment is crammed with paintings, books and sculpture, candelabra, food and drink on bright red tablecloths—a world of wealth, comfort, culture, all ashimmer—with a radiant shadowless light permeating the entire scene. The camera tracks after the whole company—including servants—as they dance and gambol through the rooms. One strongly feels the presence of time through the sense of ceremonies and rituals performed annually over many years. Looking out of the windows jewelled with frost, we see through Alexander's eyes a townscape filled with an almost magical sense of color and movement. The external world is no severe, solitary island this time, but a busy town of snow-covered gas-lit streets filled with children throwing snowballs, sleighs lit by torches, street musicians, and flower sellers. It's a world of extended families, both of the blood kind and the professional kind (the theater), and for the first time in a Bergman film a town seems a vibrant, life-affirming community, not a barren, alienated one.

The sense of celebration is extended to pillow fights among the children (inevitably bringing Vigo's *Zero for Conduct* to mind) and a comic bed-breaking sex sequence (shades of *Smiles of a Summer Night*) between a goat-like Gustav and the lame, winsome nursemaid Maj. But the life force inherent in the film is not always so boisterous and bouncy. There are quiet moments where the grandmother Helena, who on the surface seems like a traditional matriarch, recalls to her intimate friend, the Jewish antique dealer Isak (played with awkward and gentle dignity and wit by Bergman regular Erland Josephson) that "you were a sweet lover—like strawberries" (invoking memories of another Isak in *Wild Strawberries*). But for all her strength, Helena can also seem fragile and vulnerable, tearfully conscious of time passing and life passing, the clock ticking away through her scenes, as she nostalgically pores over old photographs. As usual in Bergman films, his characters are acutely conscious of death, but less as existential terror here, a clock without hands, than as mundane struggle with age and the body's weakness: the sensualist Gustav feeling faint after sex; or Oscar, with a grieving sickly face, panting for breath. Yet there are still nightmare images—the tormented brother Carl, or the Bishop's appalling aunt, horrified by the Void, the Darkness, and even Alexander asks his ghost father whether he's seen God—thus bringing back, just for a moment, the Knight of *The Seventh Seal.*

Because Oscar's death is absorbed into a social network, the identification with the Void is diminished. He is truly mourned by both theater colleagues and family—his wife hysterically pacing and crying out like a wounded animal in the night, and a fearful Alexander retreating into a foetal position as his father, seen in poignant close-up, dies. There is also a crane shot of an elegant, formal funeral procession held by the town in his memory. Oscar suffers briefly and dies, but his death is treated as neither tragic nor meaningless—he has left a legacy of affection and love.

A matter of greater grief, the fullest expression of evil in the film, is Alexander and Fanny's experience with their stepfather after their mother Emilie remarries. The thin-lipped, tyrannically handsome Bishop Vergerus (Jan

Malmsjo) is another one of Bergman's repressive pillars of orthodoxy (a parallel character in *The Magician* even has the same name). The whole segment dealing with the children's entry into the Bishop's bare, stone palace, complete with barred windows, dark attics, and a turbulent river outside, seems like a Dickensian fairy tale about cast-out children.

In Bergman's tale the two children are thrown into the absolute power of adults with cold, angry hearts—the Bishop (Bergman grants him an added dimension by making him pained about and conscious of his destructiveness), his neurasthenic sister, and his insidious mother. This malevolent household, its equally grotesque servants, plus flashing lightning and thunder, is Gothic bordering on comic—and the stylized treatment also helps to distance the overpowering sense of evil. And though the impassive Fanny (whose point of view is almost invisible in the film, but who seems a seedling for Bergman's full-fleshed placid women comforters) joylessly submits to the palace's severe regimen, Alexander sturdily and heroically rebels. He rejects the victim's role, and demonstrates breathtakingly bold courage in defying the Bishop when he knows he will not only be punished, but subjected to unusual humiliation. Alexander even angrily repudiates God and rages against his father's death (intoning "cock," "piss," "shit," during the funeral procession). He's a boy who can't easily be broken, but like the young Bergman, with his strict Lutheran pastor father, he can be deeply scarred. The Bishop's cruelty, which clothes itself in Christian love, is most loathesome with the man's continual physical touching of the boy—gestures that mimic loving ones but are instead all coercive and punitive. And there's an archetypal Bergman scene when, after Alexander has been horribly whipped by the Bishop, his mother returns home and desperately runs up to the attic, to embrace and comfort the anguished male child, curled on the floor, ancient carved figures of the crucified Christ in the background of the shot, like something washed up from deep in the waters of the unconscious of the race itself. One need only consider the pain of so many of the children in Bergman's films, from the grown son in *Wild Strawberries* to the grown daughter in *Autumn Sonata* or *Face To Face,* to know that whatever it was that really happened to Ingmar Bergman himself as a young boy, it could not have been less cruel than Alexander's pain if it left such lifelong savage scars.

In moving from the early celebratory scenes at the Eckdahl home, to the later world of the Bishop, Bergman signals the change of emotional climate by careful use of color. The warm reds, maroons, woods of the grandmother's house—and then the green leafiness, white furniture and white clothing at her summer cottage—are strongly contrasted with the pale grey-blues, blacks, stone, and bare severity of the Bishop's residence. The film also shows that in each of these worlds life contains hidden rooms, innumerable secret pockets, mysteries—perhaps a development from Bergman's early religious concern. Isak's nephew Aron quotes his uncle's kabbalah-like notion that God speaks through all things and everywhere there are spirits—though to keep life intelligible we lock these off. All things are possible, miracles, wonders. But some of those locked doors are terrifying, and when opened reveal the mad, destructive forces locked away in each household. The Bishop has a monstrous alter-ego, a bearded Aunt Elsa, passive, shapeless, face covered with sores, a constant reminder of his deformed underside, by which he is destroyed. And in Isak's mysterious antique shop—a labyrinth of nodding dolls, heaving puppets, strange masks, a breathing mummy, and even Alexander's father's mournful-looking ghost—another androgynous figure, Aron's brother Ismael (played by a woman), is locked away behind bars, his face full of shocking delicate cruelty. This figure, Alexander's alter ego, frighteningly merges with the boy in a shot reminiscent of *Persona.* Bergman again, as in the past, illuminates the anger and violence each person carries—as Alexander wills through his alter ego the death of the Bishop, after he has dismissed his guilty pitying other father as of no help to him. It's a scene which resonates with the child's fantasy of omnipotence, the ultimate Oedipal magic, with its accompanying devastating sense of guilt.

The film climaxes as it opens, with a communal celebration, a christening—the Bishop miraculously dead and Alexander's mother returned home. Gustav makes a didactic but moving speech about living in the little world

—as Oscar did earlier—but *he* means the universe of decency, kindness, and mundane amusements and subterfuges. It's a conclusion which goes back to *The Seventh Seal* when the knight sits contentedly over a bowl of wild strawberries—yearning to turn away from his tormented quest for meaning, his struggles with God and Death, for the kind of happiness associated with family and children in Bergman films. But Bergman never allows for an unambiguous embrace of life—for even Gustav says that night is falling and that Evil is like a mad dog that has slipped its chain and now freely roams the world, affecting us all. To reinforce that point, with all that well-being pervading the final small world, with Alexander home safe—absently strolling down a corridor eating cookies, Bergman has him suddenly felled to the ground by a ferocious slap from the ghost of his Bishop stepfather. You know then that wherever Alexander's life will go on to, and this is a child destined to be an Alexander the Great of some kind, the ghost hand from the far-away past will periodically reach out and smash him to the ground again. So indeed it has Bergman all his life.

Because of such moments this is like no beautifully colored and costumed epic one has ever seen. For no matter how warm, comfortable, and gregarious the world seems at the film's conclusion, Bergman's vision of life as a festive spectacle is always bound, even undermined, by his consciousness of human corruption and anguish.

If *Fanny and Alexander* is really Bergman's last film, it's a grand and fitting way to conclude a career. The film is not without flaws (though some may be a result of its having been cut for theatrical release from five to three hours). Characters like Carl and his wife are provided with an intense, moving scene and then disappear; Alexander's mother seems emotionally overwhelmed by her husband's death, but in another scene with the Bishop inexplicably speaks of never having been stirred or happy in her marriage to Oscar; and other characters including Fanny exist like mere shadows without genuine definition. And the film leaps from joy to horror and back again, sometimes cutting away too abruptly from a mood and leaving us with too many unanswered questions. But this is quibbling, for Bergman clearly wants to free himself from the limitation of a single mood or tone, for all the brilliant control and yet virtuoso variation he can bring to that—and he takes delight in moving from comedy to Gothic horror and on to psychological realism. The film sprawls—Bergman choosing to play all the notes in his rich repertoire, hence the echoes of so many earlier films. It's fitting that Bergman opts in his last film for plenitude rather than control. And yet at the same time one feels that he has this vast material under tight control—fluidly and skillfully introducing a large cast of characters, cross-cutting and interweaving their lives with great pointedness, building with care, using deep-focus shots often and well, and providing beautiful and precise visual detail.

Not only is the film artful, but in it, in a hundred ways, Bergman makes a fervent recommitment to art itself. The film opens with an exquisite image, richly colored and warmly candlelit, of Alexander moving figures within a cardboard theater proscenium. Art and life are inseparable: as the Christmas festivities draw to a close, the camera focuses on the family members as they take their farewells, as if through a proscenium arch. And at various times, characters, especially Helena, speak of their lives in terms of a series of roles. There are a number of play fragments within the film, Alexander narrates along with his magic lantern slides to a rapidly attentive audience of the other children, he is himself given to theatrical gestures, and at the heart of the struggle between him and his religious stepfather is the accusation that this story-telling boy makes up lies.

Above all, as the film begins with a theater, so it ends—not with family festivities, not even with Alexander's fall—but with the two women, Helena and Emilie, the matriarch and the young mother, planning in the dark red rooms of *Cries and Whispers* how to keep the theater going. And the boy artist carries this commitment into a third generation of artistic continuity. In the film's final image he lies with his head on his grandmother's lap, as she reads from Strindberg's *Dream Play,* nurtured not only by female strength and love, but by female artists. The words Helena reads are a total affirmation of the imagination, for weaving new patterns on the elusive and

flimsy base of reality. *Fanny and Alexander* may be Bergman's farewell to film, but it is neither a work of pure nostalgia nor of self-pity and lamentation. It is a loving testament to and celebration of the continuity, infinite possibility, and power of art and the imagination.

—BARBARA AND LEONARD QUART

BAD BOYS

BAD BOYS

Director: Richard Rosenthal. Script: Richard DiLello. Producer: Robert Solo. An EMI Film Presentation distributed by Universal Pictures and Associated Film Distribution Corp.

In the thirties the gospel according to MGM and Warner Brothers preached that there was no such thing as a bad boy: there were only bad influences. Give a troubled adolescent some hard-nosed but loving moral authority from the likes of Spencer Tracy or Pat O'Brien and he'd rehabilitate himself quicker than you could say "He's not heavy, father—he's my brother." Judging from *Bad Boys,* young punks of the eighties are perceived less as angels with dirty faces than as sociopaths with superior firepower. Indiscriminately violent, sexually sophisticated, and ruthlessly acquisitive, the new breed of teen menace seems to bring out the nascent Dirty Harry in nervous liberals. Like last year's wacko *Class of 1984, Bad Boys* is something of a socio-political curiosity: a youth rebellion film targeted at the teen-age market but siding squarely with the forces of adult authority.

The exploitation hook for *Bad Boys* is the well-publicized incidence of teen-age crime across the country—not the petty disruptions of the comparatively wimpy J.D.'s of *The Blackboard Jungle* or *Dragstrip Riot,* but big-time stuff: rape, disfigurements and multiple homicides. Directed by Rick Rosenthal from an original screenplay by Richard DiLello, the film is a crisp prison melodrama that tells the story of Chicago guttersnipe Mick O'Brien (Sean Penn), a sixteen-year-old mugger with a criminal record that would shock James Cagney. Mick snatches purses and beats intrusive citizens senseless. His Hispanic rival Paco (Esai Morales) has a flair for inner-city entrepreneurship and peddles suitcases full of pharmaceuticals to the black gang across town. As a big drug deal is about to go down, Mick tries to hijack Paco's stash and all hell breaks loose. After some picturesque gunplay and a high-speed car chase, Paco's kid brother is (accidentally) impaled on the grill of Mick's vehicle. Mick is thrown into the dorm for "critical offenders" at Rainford Juvenile Correctional Facility where he meets a colorful array of ethnic stereotypes, displays his leadership abilities, and waits for the last-reel showdown with a vengeful Paco.

All this is much more compelling than it sounds due largely to Rosenthal's fluid and economical direction. The opening sequence, which cross-cuts the activities of Mick, Paco, and the black gang, is a model of tight parallel exposition, and it builds forcefully to the tense nighttime drug deal that explodes into violence. Rosenthal's technique has advanced noticeably since his directorial debut, the axploitation sequel *Halloween II* (1981). In that film, the kabuki-like rigidity of the body-count genre worked against the director's attempts at visual coherence and narrative credibility (as did the interference from producer John Carpenter who reportedly inserted some graphic footage of his own into *Halloween II* because Rosenthal wasn't delivering enough gore-per-frame.) Of course, *Bad Boys* too is a genre effort that, despite its timely update and youthful demographics, travels over much of the familiar men-behind-bars territory. But here at least the subject matter is fairly original. Richard DiLello, whose only previous writing credit is *The Longest Cocktail Party,* a memoir of his days as "house hippie" at Apple Records, has provided an above-average narrative in which to frame what is basically a documentary-like presentation of the teen-age culture of Rainford's "Dorm C." Rosenthal is clever enough to tell the tale in a straightforward, unadorned manner, while lavishing his real attention on character development and scenic verisimilitude. *Bad Boys*

flimsy base of reality. *Fanny and Alexander* may be Bergman's farewell to film, but it is neither a work of pure nostalgia nor of self-pity and lamentation. It is a loving testament to and celebration of the continuity, infinite possibility, and power of art and the imagination.

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The exploitation hook for *Bad Boys* is the well-publicized incidence of teen-age crime across the country—not the petty disruptions of the comparatively wimpy J.D.'s of *The Blackboard Jungle* or *Dragstrip Riot,* but big-time stuff: rape, disfigurements and multiple homicides. Directed by Rick Rosenthal from an original screenplay by Richard DiLello, the film is a crisp prison melodrama that tells the story of Chicago guttersnipe Mick O'Brien (Sean Penn), a sixteen-year-old mugger with a criminal record that would shock James Cagney. Mick snatches purses and beats intrusive citizens senseless. His Hispanic rival Paco (Esai Morales) has a flair for inner-city entrepreneurship and peddles suitcases full of pharmaceuticals to the black gang across town. As a big drug deal is about to go down, Mick tries to hijack Paco's stash and all hell breaks loose. After some picturesque gunplay and a high-speed car chase, Paco's kid brother is (accidentally) impaled on the grill of Mick's vehicle. Mick is thrown into the dorm for "critical offenders" at Rainford Juvenile Correctional Facility where he meets a colorful array of ethnic stereotypes, displays his leadership abilities, and waits for the last-reel showdown with a vengeful Paco.

All this is much more compelling than it sounds due largely to Rosenthal's fluid and economical direction. The opening sequence, which cross-cuts the activities of Mick, Paco, and the black gang, is a model of tight parallel exposition, and it builds forcefully to the tense nighttime drug deal that explodes into violence. Rosenthal's technique has advanced noticeably since his directorial debut, the axploitation sequel *Halloween II* (1981). In that film, the kabuki-like rigidity of the body-count genre worked against the director's attempts at visual coherence and narrative credibility (as did the interference from producer John Carpenter who reportedly inserted some graphic footage of his own into *Halloween II* because Rosenthal wasn't delivering enough gore-per-frame.) Of course, *Bad Boys* too is a genre effort that, despite its timely update and youthful demographics, travels over much of the familiar men-behind-bars territory. But here at least the subject matter is fairly original. Richard DiLello, whose only previous writing credit is *The Longest Cocktail Party,* a memoir of his days as "house hippie" at Apple Records, has provided an above-average narrative in which to frame what is basically a documentary-like presentation of the teen-age culture of Rainford's "Dorm C." Rosenthal is clever enough to tell the tale in a straightforward, unadorned manner, while lavishing his real attention on character development and scenic verisimilitude. *Bad Boys*

Film Quarterly

CONFESSIONS OF A FEMINIST PORN PROGRAMMER

THE REST OF THE YEAR'S FILM BOOKS

DEATH WATCH *BAD BOYS*

FANNY & ALEXANDER OZU

FALL 1983

$2.50

is best as an ethnography of the tribal society that is juvenile life on the inside.

Steadicam point-of-view shots render Mick's initiation into the self-contained society that the inmates of Dorm C have created, and his talkative cellmate Horowitz (Eric Gurry) serves as cultural informant. As the new boy on the block, Mick comes in for the ceremonial greeting (the inmates line up and spit on him as he walks to his cell), the low-man-on-the-totem-pole jobs, and the special abuse of the two homoerotic barn bosses, Viking and Tweety (well-played by Clancy Brown and Robert Lee Rush.) When he rearranges the facial topography of Viking and Tweety, the unspoken codes of behavior and strict hierarchies dictate that Mick become chief of the block.

To the inmates of Dorm C, official authority is not so much hated as superfluous. Neither the burly, no-nonsense supervisor (Jim Moody) nor the priestly, empathetic one (Rene Santoni) can do more than mouth platitudes that are alternatingly tough ("Your crime is not that you got caught. It is the crime itself.") or tender ("Talk to me. I care.") Meanwhile, Dorm C's thriving black market, assaults, homosexual rapes, and murder proceed apace. The impotence of the prison officials—their total irrelevence to the teen-agers presumably under their control—is the film's most powerful statement, a statement far more convincing than the textual rhetoric aimed at the nation's bleeding-heart criminal justice system. Still, if *Bad Boys* is sympathetic to the forces of control, it is usually canny enough not to overstate their influence. Only in a scene where Mick is taken to the Illinois State Penitentiary to be "scared straight" does authority break through, and this epiphany is all too pat.

With the exception of Mick, most of the "kids" in *Bad Boys* are unsalvageable deviants eminently deserving of their incarceration. Although the baby pictures that alternate with the opening titles suggest squandered innocence, the film-makers know that an old-fashioned environmental critique in the Warner Brothers tradition is not going to wash with a modern audience. Mick and Paco are products of the mean streets and neither has a strong father figure, but most of the text blames the courts for their criminal disposition. When Mick's girlfriend warns him that the law will eventually come down hard, he replies contemptuously, "They don't do that—they take you downtown and give you lunch." The judge who sentences Mick to Rainford would rather put him in an adult prison, but unfortunately the law has not yet "incorporated a more realistic definition of juvenile offender." Boys like this, the film says again and again, *should* be locked up. In a heavy-handed but revelatory scene, the inmates at Rainford are gathered around a television watching one of the screen's trail-blazing sociopaths, Richard Widmark, push a wheelchair-bound Mildred Dunnock downstairs in *Kiss of Death*. They cheer.

The visual background restores a sense of balance to the reactionary sentiments of the screenplay. Rosenthal and his cinematographers (Bruce Surtees and David Thorin) make striking use of authentic inner-city locations on Chicago's West Side and at actual juvenile correctional facilities. Both backdrops offer an implicit rebuke to what is affirmed in the text. The dead-end urban landscapes speak with a stark and unmistakeable eloquence. Besides, when a member of the southside black gang looks around and comments, "rough neighborhood," the place has got to be *bad*.

The location work and painstakingly recreated prison interiors also add some much-needed realism to a plot that calls for major suspensions of disbelief. The obligatory escape sequence is embarrassingly contrived, and no one swallows the labored convolutions that lead to the Mick-Paco duel that climaxes the film. In this sense, the film-makers have been well-served by the excellent ensemble playing of the cast. Sean Penn's star-making performance as Mick repeatedly saves *Bad Boys* from stalling on its narrative improbabilities; onscreen he exudes such command and alertness that one sometimes wonders how his character could be so stupid as to get in this mess. Equally good is Eric Gurry (lately of *Author! Author!*) as Mick's creepy cellmate Horowitz, a barely post-pubescent electronics wiz on hand to provide exposition and a taste of serious derangement. Horowitz is a shrimp among Rainford's physically imposing inmates, but Gurry's character has such a psychotic edge that the big boys understandably leave him alone. Esai Morales does what can

be done with the thankless, one-dimensional role of Mick's nemesis, as assembly-line hot-blooded Latin with a bent sense of machismo, and Ally Sheedy is suitably stalwart as loyal J.C., the middle class object of Mick's redemptive love and Paco's vengeance. In addition, the fight scene finale, in one of the most stunning technical gaffes in memory for a commercial picture of this scale, features an uncredited appearance by a cameraman, clearly visible in the crowd cheering the boys on.

Bad Boys is no *Zero de Conduite,* but its minor virtues shine all the more beside its obvious companion piece, Francis Ford Coppola's *The Outsiders,* a film which likewise takes dead aim at the high-school crowd with a tale of misfit though attractive young teencake. A mannered and painterly recreation of mid-sixties adolescence in a naturally lit Oklahoma, Coppola's film is awash in prairie atmosphere and pubescent angst. Like *Giant* and *Days of Heaven, The Outsiders* dotes lovingly on regional sunsets and scenery, and is often beautiful to behold. But like the drive-in double bill Coppola has his protagonists attend—*Beach Blanket Bingo* and *Muscle Beach Party*—the rendering of teen life is unconvincing and intermittently ludicrous.

The bad boys in *The Outsiders* aren't put in the can—they're canonized. Coppola's delinquents possess rare sensibilities, promethean courage, and a tragic sense of life that would be overblown in a Thomas Hardy novel. On the lam for a justifiable homicide, a doomed Sal Mineo look-alike named Johnny (Ralph Macchio) ponders the Nature of Good and Evil and discusses "clouds and stuff" with the sensitive narrator Ponyboy (C. Howell Thomas), who reads *Gone with the Wind* and recites passages from Robert Frost. Only the shiftless and often shirtless Dallas (Matt Dillon) is more physical than philosophical. His presence gives the film the box-office benefit of his teen heartthrob status and completes the homoerotic triangle. As drama, much of this plays like an extended meditation on the planetarium scene in *Rebel without a Cause,* though it has none of the latter's smooth pacing, psychological depth, or narrative intelligibility (Coppola assumes a knowledge of the S.E. Hinton book which is his source.)

On screen, then, if not in the streets, one might be better off encountering the wild ones of *Bad Boys* than the delicate delinquents of *The Outsiders.* —TOM DOHERTY

The Year's Film Books

The following section opens with some additional Director Studies and then completes the book review round-up which began in the Spring issue. The categories Autobiographies and Biographies, Criticism, Director Studies, Genre Studies, and part of History were included in that issue.

Director Studies (Addenda)

ABOUT JOHN FORD

By Lindsay Anderson. London: Plexus, 1981. £7.95 cloth, £4.95 paper.

About John Ford expands and somewhat updates what was originally a monograph for a British Film Institute directors' series. Anderson's new publisher has coffeetabled his text with 385 illustrations. About one quarter of the enlarged text consists of interview materials: most importantly Anderson's separate meetings with Ford, plus a long conversation with Henry Fonda which takes us from *Young Mr. Lincoln* to *Mr. Roberts.*

Anderson's main critical purpose is to make a case for the five Ford features released in 1939–41, 1945–46. Even *Tobacco Road* gets high grades for its ability to control shifts in emotional tone. He now thinks *They Were Expendable* (1945) the central Ford film, the masterpiece. Anderson thinks the cool post-war reviews mistook, as dated wartime propaganda, what was Ford's formal intention to shoot—within the realist conventions—a wartime battle epic about people and conditions

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that was authentic, recognizable, to Ford's own actual considerable WW-II war experiences.

The whole post-Zanuck, post-studio contract period—1947–66, from *Fugitive* to *Seven Women*—Anderson treats as a kind of accumulating artistic disaster. He is particularly negative about anything after *Sun Shines Bright* (1953), the Judge Priest remake. What about *The Searchers*? Anderson gives a very good negative case, though any sympathetic viewer of the film could tell him why Ethan walks away at the end, or would realize that the point of the sudden "zoom-in to Lucy's scream" is to emphasize her realization that she *can't* scream. She's trapped.

This 1981 text may be said to recapitulate, intelligently, the anti-Dudley Nichols thesis about Ford that Anderson's earliest film journalism helped initiate, thirty years ago. (There is a popularization of this thesis in Andrew Sarris's confusedly written *John Ford Movie Mystery.*) The Ford-Nichols collaboration goes back to the coming of sound; but Anderson's thesis concerns their most ambitious films: *Informer, Long Voyage Home, Fugitive.* These films, he says, substitute an abstracted expressionism for the everyday observed world. The contrast is with the three filmed scripts of Nunnally Johnson at Fox, all of them studio jobs shot for Zanuck. The Anderson thesis is not that the Johnson-script films are relatively "better," but that their whole cinematic style is preferable. In *Prisoner of Shark Island, Grapes of Wrath, Tobacco Road,* the observed filmed world produces the thematic generalizing symbols of the story. (Notice this is not a dispute about studio-set vs. location shooting, but about the film-maker's attention to his narrative materials.)

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KUBRICK

By Michel Ciment. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982. $25.00.

When Tom Wolfe defined the transatlantic man for pop culture, he should have expanded on the transatlantic film-maker, as embodied by Stanley Kubrick, whose visions remain concretely grounded in the America of his birth but whose logic and lucidity are quite typical of figures in self-imposed exile. Perhaps it was appropriate that the best work to date on Kubrick has been done by transatlantic critic Michel Ciment, editor of the French film magazine *Positif,* whose primary interest is in directors in flight from their homeland finding refuge in film. *Kubrick* will make inroads into the study of pop-culture. It is a coffee-table book for intellectuals probably destined to be the butt of a *New Yorker* cartoon. Such an admission does not lessen its appeal. Ciment's arrangement of stills from Kubrick's films attempts to find the unifying threads of auteurist cinema, and Kubrick's own perfectionism is enhanced by Ciment's fastidiousness. Surprises abound in the unusual contrapuntal effect of juxtapositioned images from films as diverse as *Barry Lyndon* and *A Clockwork Orange.* What appears to be a color still of *Doctor Strangelove* is shocking until one realizes it must be a color production shot with an almost unidentifiable clean-shaven Kubrick, looking like one of the paunchy officers in *Wargames.* Perhaps only through the free-association inspired by Ciment's ar-

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Kubrick's balance between reason and passion is traced back to his favorite pastime, chess, in which "intuition and calculation are equally combined. Chess reveals the duality proper to every game; the evaluation of available resources and the calculation of probable consequences, the accepted risk and the anticipated result." Then Ciment cites all the chess games in Kubrick's films and elucidates their significance. He is, however, even better at showing Kubrick's career as such a chess game. Kubrick's concomitant fascination with military logistics turns out to have engendered a desire to make a film about Napoleon. By the time this is revealed, one is rather involved in the saga of Kubrick and wants him to win in this "Seventh Seal" match with Hollywood, but if his next project, *Napoleon,* is nigh, Waterloo is imminent.

Ultimately, Ciment shows that Kubrick's flaw is that of many directors out of favor in Hollywood. He has not only imagination and an impatient, driving intellect, but he is an autodidact and therefore firmly believes he can do it all himself. The pragmatist and the intellectual in Kubrick seem locked in a never-ending dialectic, which Ciment is able to ferret out. He gets Kubrick to defend *The Shining* as a film about the supernatural with a rather casual reference to Freud's essay on the uncanny: "The uncanny is the only feeling which is more powerfully experienced in art than life. If the genre required any justification, I should think this alone would serve as its credentials." Every bit his equal, Ciment later asks if his films demonstrate what William James called "the unexplained residues of human experience." Kubrick's film-making is left with no unexplained residues by the end of the book, but in a discipline flooded with vacuous books full of halting stills and stumbling criticism, a book like this is rare. Sometimes rarified, like its subject, but intensely interesting! —KAREN JAEHNE

BETWEEN FLOPS
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Claudette Colbert is stranded on a train in *The Palm Beach Story,* until she is rescued by millionaire penny-pincher Rudy Vallee, who takes her to the dining car the next morning. Instead of ordering, Vallee extols at some length the old-fashioned woman who can cook and sew. Colbert says at last, "Were you going to buy me some breakfast? Or would you like me to bake you something right here at the table?" The men in the audience laugh at this, the women scream.

A Preston Sturges revival is apparently under way. To film fanatics, it is true, he has never been away; he has always enjoyed a position of special esteem and pleasure. There may be Sturges heretics and dissenters but, if so, they have notably held their tongues. Recently, however, Universal Classics has released seven of Sturges's eight Paramount

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films, all but *The Great Moment,* in new 35mm prints. The Castro Theater in San Francisco has had two Sturges retrospectives in two years; theaters in New York, Seattle and elsewhere have also had them, as has cable-TV in Los Angeles.

Between Flops, the first full-scale biography of Sturges, reflects the renewed interest in him and may in turn augment it. Curtis has consulted the Sturges papers at UCLA and has interviewed more than 30 friends and co-workers of Sturges, many of them now dead. In addition, early drafts of the book were reviewed and corrected by four people close to Sturges: Charles H. Abramson, his friend and advisor from his first play, *The Guinea Pig* in 1929, to his last contract, with NBC in 1959; Priscilla Woolfan, a Hollywood friend; Louise Sturges, married to Sturges from 1938–1944; and Sandy Sturges, his widow. Curtis has assembled this information into a thorough factual account of Sturges's complex life, a considerable feat of research and synthesis. Particulars may be challenged by later writers; the basic outlines of his account will stand. Aside from the repeated expressions "most everyone" and "most all," the book is also quite readable.

What Curtis has not done are all the things that a critical biography can do. He does not relate the life to the work. He does not compare the successive drafts of Sturges's screenplays or compare the final script to the finished film. He does not reevaluate particular films or Sturges's entire career. He does not review prior accounts of Sturges's work, even those based upon a biographical premise.

Curtis's treatment of Sturges's Paramount period, 1939–1944, reflects the strengths and weaknesses of his factual approach. During this time Sturges wrote and directed eight films. External events were few: Sturges worked on his restaurant and sailed his boat; Louise hosted weekly parties. As for the films, Curtis relies mainly on memories of the shooting process by actors and actresses, the assistant director, and so on, and these are not particularly illuminating.

Nevertheless there emerges an overall picture of the period that is useful to the Sturges critic and contains some surprises. According to Curtis, Sturges did not like Mitchell Leisen's direction of his script for *Easy Living* (1937); he felt that his pacing was too slow and his emphasis on decor a distraction. When producer Albert Lewin left Paramount suddenly, what was to become *Remember the Night* (1940) was assigned to Leisen, now his own producer, who made cuts without consulting the writer. Sturges threatened to leave Paramount for another studio; in order to keep him as a writer, production chief William LeBaron acceded to Sturges's long-standing plea to direct. Sturges polished a screenplay he had written in 1933 and began shooting *The Great McGinty* (1940) in December 1939. On the basis of the early rushes he was authorized to prepare another film; a 1931 play, made into a 1935 screenplay, rewritten in 1940, became *Christmas In July* (1940). A third screenplay, a 1938 adaptation of a story by Monkton Hoffe, was transformed to become *The Lady Eve* (1941), which finished shooting in November 1940, less than a year after *The Great McGinty* had begun.

In February 1941, LeBaron left Paramount for Fox and was replaced by Buddy DeSylva, of the songwriting team of DeSylva, Brown, and Henderson, who was presumably brought in to consolidate Paramount's hold on the musical film. *The Lady Eve* was a commercial and critical success; the budgets and shooting times for Sturges's films increased. He wrote original scripts for *Sullivan's Travels* (1941) and *The Palm Beach Story* (1942), which he conceived as a popular comedy to follow the more serious earlier film. Sturges, now his own producer, decided to make what was later called *The Great Moment* (1944), which concerned the dentist who discovered ether and was vilified for his efforts in his own lifetime. Sturges had completed a script on the subject, called *Triumph Over Pain,* in 1939; he polished it and went into production in April 1942 against the bitter opposition of DeSylva. The latter found the complex flashback structure of the finished film incomprehensible and had it recut in straight chronological order, holding it for later release.

Sturges then shot *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1944) between late October and late December 1942, proceeding for the first time without a finished script. Because Paramount had a sizable backlog of completed films, *Miracle* too was held for later release. Sturges took ten weeks to write *Hail the Conquering*

Hero (1944) and shot it between July and September 1943. DeSylva had *Hail* recut, to eliminate the "talky" sections, and held it too for later release. Sturges's Paramount contract ended December 10, 1943; his demand for more control of his films was rejected, so he left.

Miracle opened in January 1944 to critical acclaim and commercial success, the biggest hit of Sturges's career. DeSylva let Sturges return to Paramount in April 1944, unpaid, to do some retakes on *Hail the Conquering Hero* and to restore the film to its original condition. He did not allow Sturges to do the same for *The Great Moment,* which was released late in 1944 to bad reviews after *Hail* had won rave reviews and modest commercial success in mid-year. Thus *Hail the Conquering Hero,* considered by many, including Sturges, his finest film, almost did not survive in the way that he wrote and directed it.

To escape big studio interference, Sturges formed a partnership with Howard Hughes, who badly recut the renamed *Mad Wednesday* (1946), Sturges's one film in two years. A two-year association with Fox resulted in the superb but unsuccessful *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948) and the dismal *The Beautiful Blonde From Bashful Bend* (1949), a Betty Grable vehicle that Darryl Zanuck persuaded him to do against his better judgment. That finished Sturges's Hollywood career; a final film, *The French They Are a Funny Race* (1955), was made in Paris.

As mentioned, Curtis does not interpret Sturges's life and work; but he quotes James Agee's well-known paragraphs on Sturges in *The Nation:*

> It seems to me that Sturges had reason, through his mother, to develop, as they caromed around high-Bohemian Europe during his childhood, from opera to opera and gallery to gallery, not only his singular mercurialism and resourcefulness, which come especially natural to some miserably unhappy children, but also a retching, permanently incurable loathing for everything that stank of 'culture,' or 'art.' I gather further that through his stepfather, a stable and charming Chicago sportsman and businessman, he developed an all but desperate respect and hunger for success, enhanced by a sickening string of failures as a businessman and inventor up to the age of about thirty; and that this again assumed the dimensions of a complex. I believe that in his curious career as a never-quite-artist of not-quite-genius he has managed to release and guide the energies of these influences in the only way open to him.
>
> [His] are wonderful as comedies and they are wonderfully complex and ingenious; they seem to me also wonderfully, uncontrollably, almost proudly corrupt, vengeful, fearful of intactness and self-commitment; most essentially, they are paradoxical marvels of self-perpetuation and self-destruction; their mastering object, aside from success, seems to be to sail as steep into the wind as possible without for an instant incurring the disaster of becoming seriously, wholly acceptable as art. They seem to me, indeed, in much of their twisting, the elaborately counterpointed image of a neurosis. It is an exceptionally interesting neurosis, not only because Sturges is a man of such talent and not only because it expresses itself in such fecund and in themselves suggestive images, but also because, in relation to art, it seems the definitive expression of this country at present—the stranglehold wedlock of the American female tradition of 'culture,' the male tradition of 'suçcess.'

Agee's biographical-psychological interpretation of Sturges's work has underlain much later Sturges criticism. It is rather astonishing that Curtis quotes this passage with approval, at least without disagreement, since his work serves to question Agee's premise. Sturges persisted with *The Great Moment* because he believed in the project, even though it earned him the enmity of his studio and finally undid him. This incident repeated his experience in the theater a decade earlier. *Strictly Dishonorable* (1929) was one of the greatest comedy successes of the twenties. Everyone urged Sturges to write another frothy comedy but he wrote instead *Recapture* (1930), a comedy-drama with a tragic ending, *The Well of Romance* (1930), an operetta, and *Child of Manhattan* (1932), a comedy-drama about a dance-hall girl and a millionaire that audiences found distasteful. These three flops ended his Broadway career. These do not seem to be the actions of a slave to success.

As for Agee's neurosis point, we now take it as a truism that all cultural production proceeds from neurosis. The seventies and eighties take Freud more literally than the revisionist forties. Agee's calling Sturges's films "paradoxical marvels of self-perpetuation and self-destruction" which thereby intentionally avoid the status of art is closely linked to his biographical-psychological premise and has remained so in much later Sturges criticism.

But *Christmas in July* is a model of the well-made film script; so, in a far more complex way, is *Hail the Conquering Hero. The Palm Beach Story* and *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* do seem to be falling apart and reinventing themselves continually; but this makes them seem quite modern. We no longer accept "intactness" or organicism as the only standard of art; and no longer define these so narrowly as Agee's generation did. We prize interesting strategies of self-destruction in art and no longer see such works as failing of a higher goal.

Agee's words may be read as much in relation to himself as to Sturges. He seems to be projecting himself rather directly into Sturges, which may account for the intensity of the passage and is arguably the highest tribute that a writer of Agee's stature may pay to another artist. But it will no longer serve as the basis for understanding Sturges, as Curtis's book helps us to see.

—BRIAN HENDERSON

THE DARK SIDE OF GENIUS
The Life of Alfred Hitchcock

By Donald Spoto. Boston: Little, Brown, 1983. $20.00.

Donald Spoto's new book makes fascinating reading not because of its central argument but in spite of it. Since several of the claims he advances about Hitchcock do not—and cannot—stand up to scrutiny, *The Dark Side of Genius* is at its strongest where Spoto brackets them and contents himself with providing a straightforward narrative, anecdotal account of what people who worked with or for Hitchcock remembered or chose to remember about him. It is at this impressionistic level that Spoto, who collates and recounts with real skill, is utterly absorbing; he has written a hard book to put down. And if this is not accomplishment enough, Spoto also deserves credit for chronicling the ups and downs of Hitchcock's career, which was by no means the steady, onwards-and-upwards progression of legend.

Hitchcock died in 1980 a very rich and celebrated man, having risen from inauspicious origins in the East End of London, humble beginnings from which nobody, certainly not Hitchcock himself, could ever really shake him free. (Spoto points out what some of us had long suspected, that Hitchcock in 1971 insisted on insinuating anachronistic phrases from the London of his childhood into *Frenzy,* over the heated objections of his British cast and screenwriter Anthony Shaffer.) But how are the effects of this itinerary on Hitchcock to be judged? The producer and writer John Houseman said of Hitchcock that "I had heard of him as a fat man given to scabrous jokes—a gourmet and an ostentatious connoisseur of fine wines. What I was unprepared for was a man of exaggeratedly delicate sensibilities, marked by a harsh Catholic education and the scars from a social system against which he was in perpetual revolt and which had left him suspicious and vulnerable, alternately docile and defiant." Even though this is as good a short characterization as Spoto's book contains, Spoto himself is remarkably fixated on "the fat man given to scabrous [and sometimes cruel] jokes"; it is Houseman who poses the more searching question of whether this is the man behind the mask (as Spoto seems to think) or whether this is the mask itself. One can certainly see why Hitchcock might have wanted to wear it. Spoto at one point, and in all innocence, quotes Joan Fontaine—"Hitchcock's origins were within the sound of Bow Bells, so he didn't get around much socially"—without noticing the social snub these words contain, a snub which to my mind pays back Hitchcock with interest for *Rebecca*'s Mrs. Danvers.

Be all this as it may, Spoto's chronicle indicates how uneven Hitchcock's career was. He directed 23 features from 1925–1938; 24 from 1939–1959 (along with 15 TV programs after 1955); and only 6 (with 5 TV shows) from 1960 to his death. And as Spoto's sensible periodization shows, even within his productive phases Hitchcock's career had its setbacks, its make-or-break points, its troughs and depressions. To pick one of many examples, how many of us choose to recall Hitchcock's period of "personal and professional inactivity" after *Stage Fright* in 1950, or that the TV series, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents,* was to mark such an upturn in his fortunes and reputation?

Even if it does so almost by default, *The Dark Side of Genius* casts light on Hitchcock not only by the sheer volume of infor-

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Even if it does so almost by default, *The Dark Side of Genius* casts light on Hitchcock not only by the sheer volume of infor-

mation it provides, but also by puncturing many cherished myths about him. The myth of the inexorable, steady unfolding of genius, a myth Hitchcock himself helped orchestrate, is a case in point, but there are others. There is for example the related notion of the solitary artist, misunderstood but ploughing his lonely furrow. Hitchcock himself once opined that his "films went from failures to masterpieces without ever being successes . . . They seem to take about a year to sink in," which is one of his pardonable exaggerations. As to solitude, prior to his declining years, when reclusion set in, Hitchcock appears to have been convivial, sociable and well-connected. It may be lonely at the top, but Hitchcock did not lack for company on his way there. And there is the myth of Hitchcock who, absorbed in his belief that "photographs of people talking are not films," was contemptuous and disdainful of other filmmakers. Spoto has Robert Boyle point out, quite to the contrary, that Hitchcock "could easily discuss Eisenstein's *Potemkin* or Pudovkin's *Mother*" with anyone who raised them, and he recounts Hitchcock's excited telephone call to Howard Fast: "My God, Howard! I've just seen Antonioni's *Blow-Up.* These Italian directors are a century ahead of me in terms of technique! What have I been doing all this time?"

As for the myth of Hitchcock's treating actors "like cattle," here again the record Spoto produces is mixed. He may have said of Kim Novak in *Vertigo* that "at least I got the chance to throw her in the water"—it's fascinating to learn that Hitchcock was never sure she was right for the part—and he may have treated poor Tippi Hedren abominably. But many (if not all) actors and actresses seem not to have felt badly treated. Jimmy Stewart's outburst on the set of *Rope*—"The really important thing being rehearsed here is the camera, not the actors"—is understandable enough under the circumstances; and Thelma Ritter's recollections of *Rear Window* are straightforward enough. "If Hitchcock liked what you did," she recalled, "he said nothing. If he didn't, he looked like he was going to throw up." Perhaps the best witness of all was Ingrid Bergman. "To irritate us, he would say, 'Well, all my fun is over now that you actors are here.' Because all his fun had been in the preparation, the writing, the camera set-ups, the fantasy of his mind, he regarded us as intruders to his fantasy. But he was always very controlled. He never lost his temper or screamed at anyone. And yet he always got what he wanted." Spoto reports Hitchcock as saying to Janet Leigh on the set of *Psycho* that "if you don't come up with what I need, I'll bring it out of you—and if you give too much, I'll tone it down. What you do has to fit into my framework and within my camera angle." She too got drenched, for an entire week of shooting.

Hitchcock's reputation for control on the set emerges unscathed from Spoto's account (even if Hitchcock himself does not). Teresa Wright, recalling *Shadow of a Doubt,* puts it in a nutshell: "It's as though [Hitchcock] had a little projection room in his head . . . He really scored [even] the sound effects the way a musician writes for his instruments." (Spoto, incidentally, is very good on the stunning examples of sound-mix to be found in *Frenzy*—who could forget the chill of silence that surrounds Bob Rusk's "Got a place to stay?" I only wish Spoto could have followed Teresa Wright's lead and said more about this.) We can learn a lot from *The Dark Side of Genius* about what went into Hitchcock's usually meticulous pre-production. "The most enjoyable part," in Hitchcock's own words, "is in that little office, with the writer, when we are discussing story lines and what we're going to put on the screen . . . I do not let the writer go off on his own and just write a script that I will interpret. I stay involved with him and get him involved in the direction of the picture." Samuel Taylor, who worked with Hitchcock on *Vertigo* bears him out: "Working with him meant writing with him . . . Hitchcock never claimed to be a writer, but actually he did write his screenplays insofar as he visualized every scene in his mind and knew exactly where he wanted to go." More evidence on this comes from the costume designer, Edith Head, who remembers what went into *Dial "M" for Murder:* "Every costume was indicated when he sent me the finished script. There was a reason for every color, every style, and he was absolutely certain about everything he settled on . . . He was really putting a dream together in the studio."

One of Spoto's more sensational disclosures is that Hitchcock's dream, once he tried to put it into practice, turned into Tippi Hedren's nightmare. The trouble with such a revelation is that of distinguishing where Hitchcock's prurient interest in Hedren ends and Spoto's prurient interest (and ours) in Hitchcock-and-Hedren begins. For, even though Spoto comes close to tracing Hitchcock's personal and professional decline to his rebuff by Tippi Hedren on the set of *Marnie,* what interests him most about Hitchcock's advances is that they traversed some barrier between "art" and "life." He never uses this incident to cast new light on Hitchcock's films. What we get is a few new quotes on a familiar theme: that Hitchcock liked to dress up, and thus create women, particularly women of a certain type. Hitchcock on Eva Marie Saint (in *North by North-West*): "I watched every hair on her head . . . I acted just like a rich man keeping a woman: I supervised the choice of her wardrobe in every detail—just as Stewart did with Novak in *Vertigo.*" Hitchcock on Tippi Hedren: "I brought her to Hollywood. I changed everything about her. Svengali Hitch strikes again." Samuel Taylor on *Marnie:* Hitchcock "was really doing *Vertigo* with Tippi Hedren."

The irksome thing about Spoto's book is that all his revelations, even the clearly important ones, are incidental to his main purpose in writing it, which is to unmask Hitchcock. It is an enterprise that is not without precedent. David Selznick's well-known and uncharacteristically laconic comment that Hitchcock was "not a man to go camping with" is some 40 years old by now. (This is to digress, but it is curious that in a book that deals extensively with the Hitchcock-Selznick relationship, and even more extensively with anecdotes, one of my own favorites—that Hitchcock carefully coached Raymond Burr in Selznick's mannerisms for his part in *Rear Window*—is unaccountably omitted.) One question is whether the revelations about Hitchcock with which Spoto regales the reader take us any further than Selznick's only known one-liner. Another is whether Spoto's overwritten psychologizing is of any real help. "Alfred Hitchcock was living with inner demons of lust and possessiveness, dark fantasies about killing, and unfulfilled sexual daydreams. He could be crude and cruel and tyrannical with his cast, and mercurial and unpredictable with his colleagues"; the "fears and demons of his own soul . . . were expressed through his films and occasionally unleashed in cruel jokes, outrageously scatalogical comments and . . . a systematic withdrawal from all forms of the human sharing he so desired." Perhaps he should have kept it all bottled up.

The pattern is clear enough. Spoto wishes to portray Hitchcock not as a monster of depravity, once the mask slips, but more sympathetically and tastefully, as a tormented genius. Yet in a world where not everyone is as sympathetic to Hitchcock as Spoto is (and where somebody at Little, Brown knows what makes good copy), the cruelty cannot be all Hitchcock's. A more substantive remonstrance about Spoto's book is that it fails to investigate the relationship between torment and genius. Spoto has no way of accounting for the "genius" that is said to have its "dark side" because he has so little to say about Hitchcock's films. What he does say is that they were Hitchcock's "notebooks and journals"—the notebooks and journals our intrepid, undaunted biographer could locate nowhere else. (Spoto received no cooperation from Hitchcock's family, and, in fairness, one can see why.) Hitchcock's "almost maniacal secrecy was a deliberate means of deflecting attention away from what these films really are: astonishingly personal documents." Spoto goes so far as to claim that in examining what he could uncover about Hitchcock's life, "a complex image appeared, more mysterious than any of the stories he chose to film."

This claim—a patently absurd claim, on the evidence Spoto himself produces—tells us how Spoto weights his priorities. *The Dark Side of Genius* does not recount Hitchcock's life for the sake of a better understanding of his films. Instead, Hitchcock's films are dealt out, deftly and in sequence, like cards, for the sake of carrying forward Spoto's melodramatic plot about Hitchcock's life. It may be possible, and it may be interesting, to judge Hitchcock's films as "personal documents," if we are so inclined. But it is not possible even to approach such a task without a serious, critical reading of the films in question. This

is precisely what Spoto—who contents himself with cursory plot summaries and thin, easy judgments—does not provide, which makes mincemeat of his entire enterprise. For all the value of the information it provides, *The Dark Side of Genius* is finally a kind of self-consuming artefact. —PAUL THOMAS

WILLIAM A. WELLMAN

By Frank T. Thompson, Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1983. $22.50.

William Wellman has been the subject of a surprisingly forceful polarization of critical esteem as a result of his rediscovery by scholars in the late seventies. Much of the problem seems to stem from the sheer scope and variations in quality of Wellman's work. Some critics have praised what they interpret as Wellman's latent romanticism while others have discovered in him a penchant for a certain unique, though enigmatic, realism. About the only points on which the various scholarly and critical factions agree without reservation is that Wellman's films invariably employ motifs reminiscent of his life's experiences, particularly his youthful World War I ventures into aviation, and that they are permeated with an atmosphere of masculine comraderie.

Thompson's study does little to resolve the critical disagreements surrounding the director. The book is highly entertaining, enjoyable reading and could be recommended on that basis alone, but it is at best little more than an interesting biography of a fascinating man. Despite the author's initial promise to touch only lightly upon Wellman's life and to concentrate his focus instead on the films, it is the biographical element that forms the core of the study. The picture of Wellman that emerges from the study is one of a high-living, charming tough guy with a soft center, not unlike some of his celebrated screen heroes. Almost twenty-five percent of Thompson's material appears to be gleaned, in quotations, from other books, particularly Wellman's autobiography, *A Short Time for Insanity,* and his unpublished reminiscences, *Growing Old Disgracefully;* the few insights concerning Wellman's work that the book does provide usually arise from someone else's words. And too often the quoted material neither supports nor refutes Thompson's point, but merely leads the discussion astray.

The fundamental problem with the book (and, in Thompson's defense, with other books in Scarecrow's Filmmakers Series) is that they are essentially critical biographies rather than works of criticism. Thus, as in *William A. Wellman,* the background and reception of a film becomes more important than the picture itself. The fights, pranks, and general carousing associated with the "Wild Bill" Wellman legend always overshadow the serious film-maker who successfully directed and often also wrote such diverse classics as *Wings* (1927), *Public Enemy* (1931), *Nothing Sacred* (1937), and *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1942). Certainly Wellman directed a large body of minor or just plain poor films, but how many directors can boast as many outstanding achievements among his failures?

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SACHA GUITRY

By Bettina Knapp. Boston: Twayne, 1981. $14.95.

Guitry's position in the history of cinema has been clouded by several problems: his touted disdain for the cinema as an art form, his elitism and savoir faire in art forms other than cinema, his controversial relationship with the Nazi occupiers of France, and his prodigious output, a problem of quantity versus quality. But he did lend the prestige of his thespian thaumaturgy to the screen, once sound made Guitry's special dimension transferable.

Bettina Knapp's biography views with ever-so-slight favoritism Guitry's life through the prism of his film-making. She is eminently qualified to tackle a man whose energy was invested in French theater, but she is often vague on his cinematic standing.

Knapp deals extensively with Guitry's plots, concluding that the Guitry triumvirate consisted of friendship, love, and marital infidelity, with heavy emphasis on the last. She has a light Freudian touch in explaining how Guitry's art was affected by his life. Discussing his aphorisms on the fair sex in *Father Knew Best,* she writes, "Although gallant and suave on the outside, his fear of abandonment and rejection and the resulting spiritual solitude revealed strangely enough a lack of self-esteem." At other times, it seems his fear of solitude was amply assuaged by his sheer success.

Without offering competition, Bettina Knapp allows Sacha Guitry's wit to illuminate her account of his life on film. She proves in some 218 pages how Guitry's penchant for history as anecdote and

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Knapp deals extensively with Guitry's plots, concluding that the Guitry triumvirate consisted of friendship, love, and marital infidelity, with heavy emphasis on the last. She has a light Freudian touch in explaining how Guitry's art was affected by his life. Discussing his aphorisms on the fair sex in *Father Knew Best,* she writes, "Although gallant and suave on the outside, his fear of abandonment and rejection and the resulting spiritual solitude revealed strangely enough a lack of self-esteem." At other times, it seems his fear of solitude was amply assuaged by his sheer success.

Without offering competition, Bettina Knapp allows Sacha Guitry's wit to illuminate her account of his life on film. She proves in some 218 pages how Guitry's penchant for history as anecdote and

is precisely what Spoto—who contents himself with cursory plot summaries and thin, easy judgments—does not provide, which makes mincemeat of his entire enterprise. For all the value of the information it provides, *The Dark Side of Genius* is finally a kind of self-consuming artefact. —PAUL THOMAS

WILLIAM A. WELLMAN

By Frank T. Thompson, Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1983. $22.50.

William Wellman has been the subject of a surprisingly forceful polarization of critical esteem as a result of his rediscovery by scholars in the late seventies. Much of the problem seems to stem from the sheer scope and variations in quality of Wellman's work. Some critics have praised what they interpret as Wellman's latent romanticism while others have discovered in him a penchant for a certain unique, though enigmatic, realism. About the only points on which the various scholarly and critical factions agree without reservation is that Wellman's films invariably employ motifs reminiscent of his life's experiences, particularly his youthful World War I ventures into aviation, and that they are permeated with an atmosphere of masculine comraderie.

Thompson's study does little to resolve the critical disagreements surrounding the director. The book is highly entertaining, enjoyable reading and could be recommended on that basis alone, but it is at best little more than an interesting biography of a fascinating man. Despite the author's initial promise to touch only lightly upon Wellman's life and to concentrate his focus instead on the films, it is the biographical element that forms the core of the study. The picture of Wellman that emerges from the study is one of a high-living, charming tough guy with a soft center, not unlike some of his celebrated screen heroes. Almost twenty-five percent of Thompson's material appears to be gleaned, in quotations, from other books, particularly Wellman's autobiography, *A Short Time for Insanity,* and his unpublished reminiscences, *Growing Old Disgracefully;* the few insights concerning Wellman's work that the book does provide usually arise from someone else's words. And too often the quoted material neither supports nor refutes Thompson's point, but merely leads the discussion astray.

The fundamental problem with the book (and, in Thompson's defense, with other books in Scarecrow's Filmmakers Series) is that they are essentially critical biographies rather than works of criticism. Thus, as in *William A. Wellman,* the background and reception of a film becomes more important than the picture itself. The fights, pranks, and general carousing associated with the "Wild Bill" Wellman legend always overshadow the serious film-maker who successfully directed and often also wrote such diverse classics as *Wings* (1927), *Public Enemy* (1931), *Nothing Sacred* (1937), and *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1942). Certainly Wellman directed a large body of minor or just plain poor films, but how many directors can boast as many outstanding achievements among his failures?

—STEPHEN L. HANSON
and
PATRICIA KING HANSON

SACHA GUITRY

By Bettina Knapp. Boston: Twayne, 1981. $14.95.

Guitry's position in the history of cinema has been clouded by several problems: his touted disdain for the cinema as an art form, his elitism and savoir faire in art forms other than cinema, his controversial relationship with the Nazi occupiers of France, and his prodigious output, a problem of quantity versus quality. But he did lend the prestige of his thespian thaumaturgy to the screen, once sound made Guitry's special dimension transferable.

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backroom romance led to him being evaluated as flippant and superficial, and ultimately dismissed for his "guitrisation of history." She is careful to note his debts to Molière and to weigh his devotion to French painting, allowing it to dictate many a character's physical presence in these historical extravaganzas.

This work is respectable, as thorough as 200 pages allow, sympathetic to Sacha Guitry, mindful of Truffaut's defense of him without citing it, and committed to viewing Guitry as an auteur-comedian, an artistic dedication that validates the combination of author, director and star. Guitry himself would surely have found it flattering but tedious. What he treasured in style is weighed by Bettina Knapp but found wanting in hers—panache.

—KAREN JAEHNE

History (cont'd.)

LES CINEMAS DE L'AMERIQUE LATINE

By Guy Hennebelle and Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron, eds. Paris: Lherminier, 1981.

Six years in the making, *Les Cinémas de l'Amerique Latine* assembles more historical and filmographic information between two covers than any related volume in any language. However disheartening the myriad obstacles which delayed its appearance, its release under the Mitterand government is fully consistent with a renewed French interest in the political dimensions of culture and in the cultural production of the Third World.

The editors of the volume—French film historian and critic Guy Hennebelle and Bolivian film-maker, critic and historian Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron—both intellectual activists of unflagging energy, have assembled comprehensive essays by leading national film-makers (Octavio Getino on Argentina, Jesus Trevino on Chicano cinema) and critics (Emilio Garcia Riera on Mexico, Rodolfo Izaguirre on Venezuela, Isaac Leon Frias on Peru). A smaller number of chapters (on Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guyana, Panama, and Surinam) were prepared by European or North American film scholars whose work on Latin American cinema is internationally recognized.

This handsomely illustrated volume, which includes a nine-page general bibliography and prefatory essays by Louis Marcorelles and Peruvian novelist Manuel Scorza, unfortunately buries its table of contents, European style, somewhere between the index of Film-makers and the full-page advertisements for publications of related interest. The concealment of this crucial page is less than dire because the volume is organized alphabetically by country. More than 25 nations are represented, since the editors define Latin America broadly enough to include Jamaica, Guyana and the French Antilles, as well as the Chicano cinema movement in the United States.

Though the New Latin American Cinema Movement which flourished from the mid-sixties through the early seventies is clearly the major catalyst for the volume, all the contributors trace their topic backwards in time to the introduction of the film medium in their particular country of interest. Most chapters append a chronology or "dictionary" of leading film-makers; some major sections (Brazil, Chile, Venezuela) include both. Though the subtitle of the book promises a survey of "history, economy, structures, *auteurs* and works," the former concern inevitably predominates, limiting the critical vocation to brief descriptive assessments if not simple catalogues of directors and titles.

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—JULIANNE BURTON

COCAINE FIENDS AND REEFER MADNESS An Illustrated History of Drugs in the Movies

By Michael Starks. East Brunswick, NJ: Cornwall Books, 1982. $30.00.

This is a comprehensive catalogue of references to mind-altering drugs in the movies, a study that encompasses everything from a throw-away line in *Gold Diggers of 1933* ("Say, what's he been smoking?" asks Aline MacMahon) to the "visual expressions of the psychedelic age" in the work of experimental

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film-makers Jordan Belson and Harry Smith. With two nonfiction books on psychoactive plants to his credit and as cofounder of a laboratory for three-dimensional film, author Michael Starks has solid credentials in both pharmaceuticals and film. He defines a drug film as one which has "any reference to psychoactive drugs," and takes on the daunting task of surveying all of world cinema in his effort to leave no stoning unturned.

Starks organizes his material on a more-or-less chronological basis, but it is the drugs he considers—cocaine, opium, marijuana, heroin, LSD, barbituates, and amphetamines—which determine most of his chapter headings. The range of the book and the depth of the research is impressive: from *Chinese Opium Den* (1894), filmed inside Thomas Edison's famed "Black Maria," to the stoned-out comedy of Cheech and Chong, Starks gives the impression that there is not a pipe dream, syringe scene, or trip sequence on celluloid that has not come under his scrutiny. His spadework has uncovered a veritable stash of forgotten gems: *High on the Range* (1929), a silent western in which stuntman Yakima Canutt and fellow ranch hands go loco on marijuana weed; *Hemp for Victory* (1942), a government documentary encouraging farmers to cultivate hemp (marijuana) for the war effort; and Conrad Rooks's autobiographical account of his sleep cure from heroin, *Chappaqua* (1968), which the author calls "the first feature-length classic of the psychedelic cinema."

Because the Production Code forbade the depiction of narcotics, Starks devotes a good portion of his attention to the many pre-Code silent films with drug-related themes and to surreptitious independent features like the collegiate late-show favorite, *Marihuana: Weed with Roots in Hell* (1936). His net also takes in scores of drug-addled productions from overseas, television dramas, the hallucinatory fringe of the avant-garde, and the numerous anti-drug "educational films" that played to captive audiences in high schools throughout the nation in the late sixties.

But though Starks is always informative and often amusing, his organizing metaphor—psychoactive drugs as a vehicle for grouping together a disparate collection of films—is pretty dubious. He is much better at disseminating facts than he is at putting them within a meaningful framework. His expertise on drugs and the drug experience isn't in question: he knows the street slang, economics, and physiological and psychological effects of anything that can be smoked, injected, or snorted. What he too often slights are the critical issues: what does a drug film say about its contemporary audience? how precisely do drugs influence a director's work and the audience's perception of it? Starks's discussion of drugs and film might have been more revelatory had he narrowed his field of focus and more thoroughly analyzed only those films which explicitly render on screen the psychoactive effects of drugs. He could easily have foregone the many interminable plot descriptions of movies whose concern with drugs is peripheral at best.

Stark's resistence to interpretation is evident in his brief section on Jean Cocteau. He notes that the "dreamlike or hypnotic quality" of many of Cocteau's films lend themselves to "interpretation as opium reveries," and then reprints portions of the screenplays from *Blood of a Poet* (1930) and *The Testament of Orpheus* (1959) as a substitute for that interpretation. Likewise, a *Hollywood Babylon*-type interlude on drug use in the movie colony consists for the most part of citations from M. Tomkies's *The Robert Mitchum Story,* Errol Flynn's autobiography *My Wicked, Wicked Ways,* and some Jimmy Tarantino columns from *Hollywood Life.* The book's concluding remark is indicative of the critical approach: "Psychedelics will continue to have a profound effect on the world and this will be increasingly evident in the media."

As a fact-laden, if slightly aimless, reference work, *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness* will doubtless be a prime text on its subject, and by these lights at least, Starks has done yeoman's service. His command of details and overall accuracy is awesome, and the volume's illustrations, many never before published, are well-chosen and handsomely mounted. The occasional lapses in matters of form and fact—information is repeated needlessly, stock phrases occur too regularly, several films are misdated, and he mistakes Bruce Dern for John Cassavetes in *The Wild Angels* (1966)—can be attributed to poor editing.

—TOM DOHERTY

BALKAN CINEMA

By Michael J. Stoil. Ann Arbor: UMI esearch Press, 1982. $39.95.

Political sensitivity does not prevent Stoil from seeing ideology as an imposition; it does keep him from denouncing Balkan cinema as propaganda. A cautious study of the Marxist morality plays of the Balkan states of Albania, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, this political and ideological analysis keeps its focus on the average production from those little-known countries. Directors known to the West as a result of "ideological erosion" are eschewed.

The political use of cinema is explained in terms of Zhdanovism, a doctrine which grew from theories of Aleksei Alexandrovich Zhdanov, who contended that art is a weapon of struggle and the class conflict can be understood through art only when it reduces reality to its essentials. The "essential" cinema that resulted was meant to effect the ideological remolding of the audience. Stoil's most astute judgment is applied there: "Motion pictures are apparently especially ill-suited for an attempt at 'conversion' of a population from one set of attitudes to an opposing set." Yet, the struggle persists.

The failure of these nationalized cinemas reflects the lack of creativity and pluralism in their social systems. The past, of course, is used to explain present ills, so the historical film has dominated productions, revealing a preference for interpreting any past but the most recent. Nevertheless, this has given rise to at least one interesting genre: the Rumanian western or *hajduk* film, a genre served by the necessity of ideological simplification.

The Stalinist past has been portrayed in only one film, the Rumanian *The Power and the Truth* (1972), an epic from the Buftea studios meant to illustrate to the folk why Ceaucescu, their new strong man, was an improvement. No such pragmatic reason lies behind the distribution and subsequent popularity of films like Krsto Papić's *A Production of Hamlet at Mrdusši Donjoj,* which dealt the Party a few blows. In this study, the exceptions prove the rule.

Surely, the Balkan peoples have a unique way of filtering the ideology from the drama, so as to continue to patronize their own cinemas. Such an attempt at sociological psychology would have contributed to our understanding of their self-image. Other than bad films, these "Balkan" countries have little in common. If one proceeded from the standpoint of the masses rather than from that of the ideologues, one might find something more interesting here than Zhdanovism. To lump the Balkan films as we do the countries is to repeat the disservice we do them when we generalize from geography.

—KAREN JAEHNE

THE DREAM BESIDE ME

By Carol Traynor Williams. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1980.

The Dream Beside Me is Carol Traynor Williams's search for the roots of her feminism in the forties films of her childhood. She applies a good deal of present-day research to her memories of faces, stars, roles and role-modeling, commenting along the way on the relations between American women and men.

Clued in by her memories, Williams states, for example, that "strong" forties stars such as Katherine Hepburn and Bette Davis, favored by contemporary feminist film theorists, were neither the favorites nor the role models of her youth. In the same vein she challenges the "myth of the ground-breaking career women" in forties films, suggesting we look to the patriotic heroines and self-reliant war-wives for the seeds of future feminism. Her chapter on iconography is noteworthy for descriptions of good, bad, and good-bad female roles distributed in selected oppositions of hair color and character traits.

Unfortunately we find these moments of interest and intelligence mostly in spite of Williams's familiarity with and enthusiasm for her subject. The materials begin to seem too extensive and Williams seems to be horribly impressed by the complexity of it all. When discussing Bogart and Bergman as Rick and Ilsa in *Casablanca,* for instance, they are held up as examples of positive role models for sexual/romantic relations between women and men. Later, however, she reverses this appraisal without explanation when she writes that romantic conventions "far more than

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The problem, however, extends beyond an inability to be definitive about the contradictions she finds. It is partly methodological. *The Dream Beside Me* is largely based on the premise that Williams's memories privilege her with the ability to identify films which were "more influential and reflected more of the spirit of the times" than those which are often referred to by other feminist and sociological film historians. Personal experience is an important, largely accepted aspect of feminist theory. But Williams does not explain her method in combining her memories with those of her other informants. Further, she does not indicate who these people are (class background, location), how many they are or when they are referred to.

The other part of the problem is that having described various structures of life experience, narrative trends, and iconography she provides no means of systematizing them. She writes that romantic expectations based on movie conventions are "as much, and perhaps more, the fault of Dolores Moran, as they are the fault of Bette Davis and Scarlett O'Hara" (p. 154). This is a conflation of actor and role which places two real persons and a fictional character at an equal level of consciousness, responsibility and social power. Though this is a particular moment of confusion in the text, Williams does not generally differentiate between conscious and subconscious role-modeling or role-acting nor put these processes in relation to each other.

Nor does Williams discuss exactly what it is that boys and girls take in from the movies or how this social coding happens, though this question is at the heart of this book. She poses it like a cliff-hanger at the end of various chapters, but apparently it is only a rhetorical device. This is the problem of asking materialist questions but working from idealist assumptions. When discussing iconography she describes as a semiotician (referring to Barthes) but does not correspondingly analyze as a structuralist. Another way of putting it is that where Barthes finds all things relational, Williams finds all things relative. It is a basic epistemological confusion that explains the failure to be definitive when facing the complexity of the material.

Williams concludes that in order to decode the Hollywood promise of resolution and romance we should seek catharsis, not exorcism. Presumably the book has been a catharsis for the author, but given the last decade of work in feminist, psychoanalytic and film theory *The Dream Beside Me* is insufficient and a disappointment. —KATE BENN

THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL GOES TO WAR

By Allen L. Woll. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1983. $19.95 cloth, $9.95 paper.

Woll has provided a careful and refreshingly readable survey of the overall historical development of the wartime musical. According to his brief introduction, critics have quite often overlooked the serious nature of the political and social implications of the film musical. He challenges the view of those who have dismissed the film musical as mere escapist art, and contends that film musicals between 1941 and 1945 especially should be taken seriously as a reflection of the political commitment of Hollywood's film-makers. He correctly argues that the film musical did not ignore the threat of war, but instead encouraged a move away from isolationism and almost universally supported the total war effort in film after film.

For the most part, it is an excellent guide to the history of wartime musicals as both an indicator and agent of American cultural changes before and during World War II. Woll first sets the context of Hollywood's place in American entertainment and then of musicals within the studio system during the thirties. He contends that films became smaller in scale during this period and at the same time more patriotic. In short, Woll has made a major contribution toward the understanding of how these highly successful films contributed to the sense of mission among movie audiences in the form of "committed entertainment." Especially interesting are the chapters that discuss the Warner Brothers war musicals, the Latin American musical films, the role of women, the musical film scores, wartime musical dance scenes, and the role of blacks and how "the musical melting pot idealized American democracy for its ability to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination." (p. 131).

Bergman [and] Bogart . . . created the Ilsa and Ricks who smother us still."

The problem, however, extends beyond an inability to be definitive about the contradictions she finds. It is partly methodological. *The Dream Beside Me* is largely based on the premise that Williams's memories privilege her with the ability to identify films which were "more influential and reflected more of the spirit of the times" than those which are often referred to by other feminist and sociological film historians. Personal experience is an important, largely accepted aspect of feminist theory. But Williams does not explain her method in combining her memories with those of her other informants. Further, she does not indicate who these people are (class background, location), how many they are or when they are referred to.

The other part of the problem is that having described various structures of life experience, narrative trends, and iconography she provides no means of systematizing them. She writes that romantic expectations based on movie conventions are "as much, and perhaps more, the fault of Dolores Moran, as they are the fault of Bette Davis and Scarlett O'Hara" (p. 154). This is a conflation of actor and role which places two real persons and a fictional character at an equal level of consciousness, responsibility and social power. Though this is a particular moment of confusion in the text, Williams does not generally differentiate between conscious and subconscious role-modeling or role-acting nor put these processes in relation to each other.

Nor does Williams discuss exactly what it is that boys and girls take in from the movies or how this social coding happens, though this question is at the heart of this book. She poses it like a cliff-hanger at the end of various chapters, but apparently it is only a rhetorical device. This is the problem of asking materialist questions but working from idealist assumptions. When discussing iconography she describes as a semiotician (referring to Barthes) but does not correspondingly analyze as a structuralist. Another way of putting it is that where Barthes finds all things relational, Williams finds all things relative. It is a basic epistemological confusion that explains the failure to be definitive when facing the complexity of the material.

Williams concludes that in order to decode the Hollywood promise of resolution and romance we should seek catharsis, not exorcism. Presumably the book has been a catharsis for the author, but given the last decade of work in feminist, psychoanalytic and film theory *The Dream Beside Me* is insufficient and a disappointment. —KATE BENN

THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL GOES TO WAR

By Allen L. Woll. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1983. $19.95 cloth, $9.95 paper.

Woll has provided a careful and refreshingly readable survey of the overall historical development of the wartime musical. According to his brief introduction, critics have quite often overlooked the serious nature of the political and social implications of the film musical. He challenges the view of those who have dismissed the film musical as mere escapist art, and contends that film musicals between 1941 and 1945 especially should be taken seriously as a reflection of the political commitment of Hollywood's film-makers. He correctly argues that the film musical did not ignore the threat of war, but instead encouraged a move away from isolationism and almost universally supported the total war effort in film after film.

For the most part, it is an excellent guide to the history of wartime musicals as both an indicator and agent of American cultural changes before and during World War II. Woll first sets the context of Hollywood's place in American entertainment and then of musicals within the studio system during the thirties. He contends that films became smaller in scale during this period and at the same time more patriotic. In short, Woll has made a major contribution toward the understanding of how these highly successful films contributed to the sense of mission among movie audiences in the form of "committed entertainment." Especially interesting are the chapters that discuss the Warner Brothers war musicals, the Latin American musical films, the role of women, the musical film scores, wartime musical dance scenes, and the role of blacks and how "the musical melting pot idealized American democracy for its ability to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination." (p. 131).

The brief chapter entitled "That Proustian Spirit" is a remarkably good one. It successfully discusses wartime Hollywood's curious use of nostalgia as a favorite genre. Although films like *Yankee Doodle Dandy* attempted to portray the past, "the past provided no refuge for a war-weary world." (p. 152). Woll's most interesting conclusion is that escapism was thus nearly impossible because nostalgic films were trapped in the violence of the present day. —ARTHUR McCLURE

Alexander, William. *Film on the Left: American Documentary Film from 1931 to 1942.* Princeton: Princeton University, 1981. $27.50 cloth, $12.50 paper. Highly motivated and carefully researched, the study traces American depression-era documentary from the Film and Photo League through the Nykino offshoot into Frontier Films, periodically emphasizing the work of Ivens. Lorentz, Van Dyke and Sheldon Dick (who made *Men and Dust* in 1940). Among others, Alexander interviewed Tom Brandon, Leo Hurwitz, Lew Jacobs, Herbert Kline, Irving Lerner, Ben Maddow, Leo Seltzer, Ralph Steiner, Paul Strand, and Willard van Dyke. —J.F.

Barlow, John D. *German Expressionist Film.* Boston: Twayne. *German Expressionist Film* is a general survey that will be of interest primarily to students seeking an introduction to this field. A major problem in this regard, though, are the illustrations, which are few and surprisingly conventional. Whole sectors of the book describe and analyze specific shots in hard-to-see films that receive no visual representation at all in the text, much less the particular images in question. The author is heavily influenced by Lotte Eisner's work, and those who quarrel with Eisner will have little use for the present book. Perhaps because of the survey-the-whole-field nature of the book, Barlow often tosses off ideas that don't get the development they deserve, as general theses about Expressionism. Nonetheless, many of his remarks about particular films are useful, and the overall views of certain films, such as *Metropolis,* are illuminating. The author is most thorough and helpful on the connections between the films and literary expressionism. —ALAN WILLIAMS

Behlmer, Rudy. *America's Favorite Movies: Behind the Scenes.* New York: Ungar, 1982. $19.95 cloth; $11.95 paper. Behlmer thoroughly examines 15 classic films (including *Frankenstein, Lost Horizon, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Stagecoach, The Grapes of Wrath, The Maltese Falcon, Casablanca*) from the perspective of how they were conceived and produced as film projects. Behlmer is meticulous in his research and his writing is straightforward, as he compares the films with their original source material. When applicable, he even discusses remakes. Ultimately, Behlmer provides an informative and valuable historical framework for the understanding of the Hollywood studio system with the aid of interviews, studio files, and highlights from the scripts. Although this book is not a direct survey of the intricacies of the studios, it effectively reveals the ways in which they operated and the nature of film as a collaborative art form. Along the way, however, we are given noteworthy examples of individual creativity: the painstaking attempt to produce an imaginary vision of the Orient as Paradise in *Lost Horizon;* Ford's continued patience as he instilled polished acting techniques in John Wayne during the filming of *Stagecoach;* the dedication and discipline displayed by Walt Disney as he built a school for animators on his studio lot. —BILL DESOWITZ

Bermel, Albert. *Farce.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. $9.95 paper. Although this is basically a survey of stage farce through the ages, it has somewhat wandering but intelligent chapters dealing with silent and sound comedy (screwball and otherwise). —E.C.

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Halliwell, Leslie. *Halliwell's Film Guide* (3rd ed.). New York: Scribner's 1982. $39.95. Chalk up another in the seemingly endless line of Halliwell's editions. Maybe he will eventually get it right. His prefatory remarks indicate he is constantly making corrections. (Is not an historian supposed to ascertain facts before he publishes?) Although not as obviously prejudiced as his *Filmgoer's Companion,* the admitted bias is evident. Also, there are errors, misleading plot summaries, and prejudicial critical assessments. It is, however, a handsome book, and if you do not expect too much, you will be satisfied. But, for $40, you'd do just as well with a $5 paperback "misguide" to televised movies—Maltin or Scheuer, for example. In any case, no real historical value but helpful in deciding what to watch. —DAN GREENBERG

_____. *Hallowell's Hundred: A Nostalgic Choice of Films from the Golden Age.* New York: Scribner's, 1982. $25.00. Entertaining reminiscences of the "likeable and efficient" films that have stuck with Halliwell as the best of the industry's achievements. —E.C.

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Halliwell, Leslie. *Halliwell's Film Guide* (3rd ed.). New York: Scribner's 1982. $39.95. Chalk up another in the seemingly endless line of Halliwell's editions. Maybe he will eventually get it right. His prefatory remarks indicate he is constantly making corrections. (Is not an historian supposed to ascertain facts before he publishes?) Although not as obviously prejudiced as his *Filmgoer's Companion,* the admitted bias is evident. Also, there are errors, misleading plot summaries, and prejudicial critical assessments. It is, however, a handsome book, and if you do not expect too much, you will be satisfied. But, for $40, you'd do just as well with a $5 paperback "misguide" to televised movies—Maltin or Scheuer, for example. In any case, no real historical value but helpful in deciding what to watch. —DAN GREENBERG

_____. *Hallowell's Hundred: A Nostalgic Choice of Films from the Golden Age.* New York: Scribner's, 1982. $25.00. Entertaining reminiscences of the "likeable and efficient" films that have stuck with Halliwell as the best of the industry's achievements. —E.C.

Kaplan, Mike, ed. Variety *International Motion Picture Marketplace 1982-1983.* New York: Garland, 1982. $50.00. Addresses and telephone num-

bers for a huge variety of agents, producers, distributors, production service and publicity companies. If you need to rent a plane, hire a catering service, or find a distributor in Gambia, here's the information. —E.C.

Kei, Shu, ed. *Cantonese Cinema Retrospective (1960-69).* The Sixth Hong Kong International Film Festival: Hong Kong, 1982. General articles on the gradual decline, in the sixties, of Cantonese film. Plus articles on and interviews with individual filmmakers, and program notes for films cited herein and screened at the 1982 Festival. —DON WILLIS

Maltin, Leonard, ed. *TV Movies,* 1983-84 edition. Brings the total films listed to about 15,000, including 1,500 made-for-TV movies. Prefaced with some cautionary observations about the editing changes that films suffer en route to the home viewer. —E.C.

_____. *The Whole Film Sourcebook.* New York: New American Library, 1983. $9.95. This is a kind of domestic *International Film Guide,* providing access to the major institutions of the film world. It gives detailed information on the major film study programs (though aspiring students are well advised to make a personal visit to any school they are serious about); it provides a thumbnail sketch of the industry as it exists today, a select basic-film books bibliography and a guide to English-language film periodicals, a directory of international festivals and one of specialized US film-exhibition sites. Lists of research collections, bookstores, photo sources, and 16mm distributors are also included. No such volume can be altogether complete, but in the areas I'm familiar with I detected no significant omissions. —E.C.

McCavitt, William E. *Radio and Television: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography.* Supplement One: 1977-1981. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1982. Careful annotations; index.

McClintock, Marsha Hamilton. *The Middle East and North Africa on Film: An Annotated Filmography.* New York: Garland, 1982. $50. A guide to 2460 films—classroom films, TV documentaries, travelogues, sponsored films, etc. (No fiction films are included.) —E.C.

Michael, Paul. *The Academy Awards: A Pictorial History.* New York: Crown, 1982. $17.95. Shale, Richard. *Academy Awards.* New York: Ungar, 1982. $14.50. Of the making of Academy Awards books there is no end, but each has its strengths and weaknesses. No one of them stands tall above the others. The serious film reference collection will need more than one; the less serious will need to decide which serves best. Both of these are updated through the 1981 Awards given in March 1982. Unfortunately the Shale updates are mostly tacked on to the end of the earlier edition rather than being integrated into the text. —RAOUL KULBERG

Orlin, Lesley, E., ed. *Media Review Digest 1982, Volume 12.* Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1982. $189.00. This annual volume provides convenient access to reviews and other kinds of information on a considerable number of films as well as videotapes, filmstrips, records, tapes, and other items, mainly of educational intent or usefulness. Brief summaries are given for many educational films, and sometimes brief quotes from reviews of fiction films. —E.C.

Ozer, Jerome S., pub. *Film Review Annual 1981.* Englewood, NJ: Film Review Publications (340 Tenafly Road, Englewood, NJ 07631). 1983. $75.00. This is a monster (1,000-page) collection of reviews (in their entirety) of some 300 features, plus indexes. The reviews are drawn from 16 American and British magazines and newspapers. A convenient source of a vast amount of material. —E.C.

Parish, James Robert and Vincent Terrace. *Actors' Television Credits: Supplement II: 1977-1981.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1982.

Pohle, Robert W., Jr., and Douglas C. Hart. *The Films of Christopher Lee.* Metuchen, N.J. and London: Scarecrow Press, 1983. This is an exhaustive, film-by-film chronology of the career of Lee in movies and television. It includes cast, credit, and plot information, plus quotes from reviews, and incidental notes, on all 150-plus of Lee's films, and *almost* all of his TV appearances. Best of all, each title entry features annotations by Lee himself. They prove to be a charming miscellany of anecdotes, critiques, trivia, insights, and tributes to fellow actors and anecdotalists, and show Lee to be as capable an observer as he is an actor. A photo gallery in the middle of the book features at least one photo from just about every film and TV show in which Lee has appeared. The one false note: a superabundance of introductions and forewords starts the book off uncertainly, as the authors attempt to justify their efforts. They (and their subject) seem embarrassed by their subject's identification with horror movies, and accordingly downplay his Hammer-horror-king image and play up his versatility. The term "horror movies" is, admittedly, occasionally only a convenient term, useful for lumping certain films together, but if, say, *Horror of Dracula* isn't a horror movie ("melodrama," says Lee), a lot of people have yet to be undeluded. (It's almost a definition of what a horror movie is, or should be.) —DON WILLIS

Salem, James M. *A Guide to Critical Reviews: Part IV: The Screenplay, Supplement One: 1963-1980.* Methuen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1982. A bibliography (non-annotated) of reviews of some 6500 films, mostly features.

Singer, Michael, ed. *Directors: A Complete Guide.* Lone Eagle Productions, Inc. (9903 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 204, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212). This guide carries the aims and purposes of the

membership directory of the Directors Guild one step further. For most of the 1,000 directors listed this volume includes dates of birth, business and/or home addresses and film credits (with production companies and dates of release). Theoretically only working directors are included, but its compiler has added some "out of sheer respect for their place in film history"; thus Frank Capra makes it and Arthur Lubin does not. A useful reference source whose value will increase once all its entries are complete; surely it was possible to include more than just a list of films for George A. Romero? —ANTHONY SLIDE

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Hurley, Gerard T. *Open Ended: A Film/Video Source Book with the Film/Video Index.* Kendall-Hunt Publishing Co., 2460 Kerper Blvd., Dubuque, IA 52001, 1982. Textbook, syllabus and exercise materials collected from the author's career as a film and video teacher. —E.C.

Theory

LOVING WITH A VENGEANCE
Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women

By Tania Modleski. Shoestring Press, P. O. Box 4327, Hamden, CT, 1982. $15.00.

"Harlequin understands how you feel about love," a woman assures us in an inviting, confidential tone on television commercials for the paperback romances. The phenomenal success enjoyed by Harlequin Enterprises certainly validates such a claim. Along with "female Gothic" paperbacks and soap operas, Harlequin romances represent a dependably lucrative industry of what Tania Modleski terms "mass-produced fantasies for women." *Loving with a Vengeance* examines these forms of popular culture for women, using feminist, psychoanalytic, semiotic and Marxist critical approaches to explain their appeal to women. As Modleski persuasively argues, "The price women pay for their popular entertainment is high, but they may still be getting more than anyone bargained for." (p. 34)

This book belongs to the body of popular criticism which challenges the elitist validation of high art over mass art typical of critics on the right, as well as the blanket disparagement of popular culture by Frankfurt school critics and others on the left. This kind of criticism, which pushes beyond the notion of mass art as merely a disseminator of false consciousness, can be found in the pages of *Tabloid: A Journal of Mass Culture and Everyday Life,* a new journal for which Tania Modleski is a member of the editorial collective. The goal in this kind of study is to understand the complex relationship between popular culture and real needs, conflicts and desires experienced in daily life. This non-evaluative approach is crucial in the study of popular culture for women, which has been routinely dismissed as simple-minded and excessively emotional, and therefore denied any serious critical attention from either men or women.

In the book, Modleski examines Harlequins, female Gothics and soap operas in turn, emphasizing their precedents among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary genres, on the one hand, and the particular psychological mode they require of the reader or viewer, on the other. Harlequins employ conventions of the romance and the melodrama, with the heroine in a central, if powerless, position in the narrative. Like female Gothics, they deal with "the mystery of masculine motives," (p. 39) according to Modleski, following the invariable rule that all hostile, aggressive behavior on the part of the hero is caused by his ardent love for the heroine. The contradictory demands placed on the heroine in the story and

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In the book, Modleski examines Harlequins, female Gothics and soap operas in turn, emphasizing their precedents among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary genres, on the one hand, and the particular psychological mode they require of the reader or viewer, on the other. Harlequins employ conventions of the romance and the melodrama, with the heroine in a central, if powerless, position in the narrative. Like female Gothics, they deal with "the mystery of masculine motives," (p. 39) according to Modleski, following the invariable rule that all hostile, aggressive behavior on the part of the hero is caused by his ardent love for the heroine. The contradictory demands placed on the heroine in the story and

he considers "an extension of the central nervous system." The approach is predominantly technotwit enthusiasm for novel gizmos, but it includes quite a lot of history of various attempts to do new things, some of them lovely. —E.C.

Pike, Frank, ed. *Ah! Mischief: The Writer and Television.* London: Faber and Faber. 1982. £2.95. If you wonder why British television has been so much better than American, some of the answers can be found in this brief, witty (and yes, mischievous in the best sense) collection of observations by brilliant people who have worked for the BBC and its rivals in London. These people are ingenious, determined, and sometimes quite mad; they *fight* for what they want, and by some mysterious British quirk, the system was not always able to stop them. (It has, regrettably, gotten tougher lately, but the struggle continues.) —E.C.

Textbooks

Courter, Philip R. *The Filmmaker's Craft: 16mm Cinematography.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983. $29.95. A clearly written and comprehensive textbook/manual, especially good in its diagrams of screen-direction rules in situations more complex than stationary two-shots. A good mix of theoretical background and practical day-to-day advice. —E.C.

Edmonds, Robert. *The Sights and Sounds of Cinema and Television: How the Aesthetic Experience Influences our Feelings.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1982. $14.95 paper. An intelligent general textbook for introductory film courses, with perceptive sections on the aesthetic differences between film and television. —E.C.

Hurley, Gerard T. *Open Ended: A Film/Video Source Book with the Film/Video Index.* Kendall-Hunt Publishing Co., 2460 Kerper Blvd., Dubuque, IA 52001, 1982. Textbook, syllabus and exercise materials collected from the author's career as a film and video teacher. —E.C.

Theory

LOVING WITH A VENGEANCE
Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women

By Tania Modleski. Shoestring Press, P. O. Box 4327, Hamden, CT, 1982. $15.00.

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the reader (who already knows the story), resemble the psychological state of hysteria and can also be viewed as revenge fantasies. Female Gothics follow a generic pattern established by Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* in the eighteenth century and reflect "the paranoid process," as the heroine is led to suspect that her husband is trying to kill her or drive her mad. These novels are preoccupied with women's fear of men, their feelings of alienation in marriage and entrapment in the home. In film, these "gaslight" stories (the classic being Hitchcock's *Rebecca,* 1940) have never received the critical attention of *film noir*—male paranoia enjoying a higher status, generally speaking, than female paranoia. Yet these films deal with a feminine resolution of the Oedipal conflict, women's alienation from the nuclear family and Angst in the nineteen-forties and fifties.

Modleski carefully outlines the conventions of Harlequins and Gothics, and her arguments are well-supported with examples from the novels. Much of her analysis is based on Freudian theory, though Modleski acknowledges the feminist critique of psychoanalysis in her introduction. Of particular interest for feminist critics is her provocative interpretation of Freud's concept of the uncanny as it pertains to women. More problematic is the reliance on psychoanalytic case studies and their comparison to fictional heroines and audience members. In citing this material, Modleski seems to lack a healthy feminist skepticism about reports from psychoanalysts about their female patients.

The chapter on soap operas (originally published in shorter form in *Film Quarterly,* Fall 1979) suggests a close relationship to nineteenth-century domestic novels and an experience for the viewer which approximates that of the "ideal mother." Soap opera viewers must identify and sympathize with a large community of characters, who have conflicting interests and whose stories are constantly interrupted. The impossibility of any singular identification replicates the position of feminine selflessness, the impossibility of narrative resolution that of powerlessness. Dispersion, incompleteness and interruption—the primary features of soap opera's narrative structure—also describe women's work in the home and position in the family.

"Mass art not only contains contradictions, it also functions in a highly contradictory manner: while appearing to be merely escapist, such art simultaneously challenges and reaffirms traditional values, behavior and attitudes." (p. 112) This statement is the basis for Modleski's approach in *Loving with a Vengeance,* which represents a significant contribution to the ideological analysis of popular culture. Much of the force of her analysis comes from her own engagement as a reader and viewer, and her refusal to adopt any relationship of superiority towards the audience. Modleski acknowledges that even for feminists, Harlequins, Gothics and soap operas can speak profoundly to conflicts that are central in our daily lives. In explaining the appeal of these mass-produced fantasies, Modleski challenges us to begin imagining and producing healthier fantasies for women.

—ELLEN SEITER

THE ELEMENTS OF CINEMA
Toward a Theory of Cinesthetic Impact

By Stefan Sharff. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Somewhere between theory and a manual lies method. Stefan Sharff's new book is not a film manual—it does not tell us what a camera is or what F-stops are. It is a method of how to order film in what the author considers a "complex, cinematic" manner. While Sharff may use the word "theory" in his title, he is not what we would usually consider a theorist. Theory generalizes across a range of particulars to elaborate an abstract system. Method begins with a similar intention to generalize, but for a different end—namely, to propose practical suggestions. Sharff has examined many movies and pulled out the most successful ways of presenting information, and illustrated each of these techniques for us.

The eight forms of "complex" cinema that Sharff chose to explain to us he calls: separation, parallel action, familiar image, slow disclosure, cinesthetic movements (i.e., camera movements), multi-angularity, and master shot. He explains how each one works, and then has a shot-by-shot pictorial example reproduced. The examples in the chapters all correspond to a particular film-maker's

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forte, e.g., Hitchcock and separation. Sharff presents examples from master directors, explains the purpose of specific shots in a clear and precise way. He gives us his version of the rules of cinematic grammar, so that we can either practice them or break them. Since Sharff teaches at Columbia, it is easy to imagine the book used as a text in a beginning directing class; it contains many useful insights about how the "masters" ordered and organized their films, and just what makes certain films so compelling. Unfortunately, the drawings of the shots range from serviceable to illegible, and this makes the reader stop and try to decipher what exactly is being pointed out.

One wonders why Sharff is so insistent on what he calls "complex, cinematic" ways of ordering films. All films that don't follow his rules are labeled "simple." Yet he never really tells us what the difference is except the misuse of what he has outlined as "separation, multi-angularity, master shot." His examples are almost exclusively Hollywood directors who not only have the means available to utilize the latest techniques, but ones that might be open to accusations of simplicity, particularly in content. Sharff maintains that all movies that are "complex" force the viewer into an active process of "constantly matching chains of shots." The activity of "matching" prevents the viewer from being a voyeur (even though we are following the movements of a character in some intimate moments).

Sharff's notion of the voyeuristic audience is problematic. How can Sharff level this charge when a substantial body of work has been devoted to voyeurism and its counterpart, scopophilia, in film, and Hollywood films in particular? Does inventive cinematic form absolve Hitchcock, Ford, and Hawks (all examples in Sharff's book) from the other forms of voyeurism in which their films engage an audience? (Particularly in regard to women.) Sharff has not proved his claim that people who utilize proper cinematic syntax circumvent voyeurism.

Aside from these reservations, Sharff has done a wonderful job of dissecting standard cinematic forms. It is a book that should be recommended to all beginning film-makers and cinephiles. —J. SCOTT GRANT

READINGS AND WRITINGS
Semiotic Counter-Strategies

By Peter Wollen. New York: NLB/Schocken Books, 1983. $25.00 cloth, $8.95 paper.

Peter Wollen's collection of essays is most of all a book about borders: the borders of theory and fiction, of modernism and postmodernism, of avant-garde and popular cultures, of signifier and signified. *Readings and Writings* pulls together essays and fictional pieces from the last 15 years into something less than a coherent ensemble, but something much more exciting than a mere series of articles strung together. The term synergy seems appropriate here, referring to a whole stronger or more meaningful than the simple sum of its parts.

There have been many theoretical discussions of the place of the author in the text, written in a dry scientific language which obfuscates the critic's voice, presumably in the attempt to avert the dangers of an individualist bourgeois style. Recently, the critic's voice has emerged as itself a worthy subject of investigation, bringing forth an array of experiments which seek to foreground this position while avoiding the pitfalls of exacerbated individualism. This has led to fascinating work such as *Polylogue* which contains a comingling of Julia Kristeva's voice with that of her husband, Philippe Sollers—she the critic reading his novel *H,* the line of demarcation between the two remaining blurry, ambiguous, troublesome. In *Feminism and Psychoanalysis,* Jane Gallop explains how the adoption of many voices has been carried out by French Lacanian psychoanalyst Lemoine-Luccioni who introduces footnotes to her essays by seemingly different writers with names, variations on her own, all pseudonyms for herself. Wollen ventures into similar realms filled with equally exciting possibilities.

Readings and Writings is divided into four sections equal in length but different in aim. A first section regroups articles on film semiotics proper and includes essays on *North by Northwest* (a Proppian analysis), *Psycho, Citizen Kane* (an excellent introduction for basic film "reading" classes) and on semiotic problems such as the hermeneutic code. A second section focuses on broader aesthetic problems. Case in point: the definition of

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While making suggestive theoretical remarks about the author, Wollen plays a game of hide-and-seek with the reader; chameleon-like, he invents different styles for different pieces. The charm of this collection resides in an undogmatic and unhierarchized mixture of levels, textures and contents. Now he empathetically enters the vibrant, painful, highly colored world of a Frida Kahlo, now the complicated transformations in the life of Tina Modotti: from Edward Weston model, to photographer, to revolutionary. First he sets the facts down, then he weaves them again and again, poetically, obsessively, his style invoking that of his subject:

> Frida and Tina. Tina and Frida. First I heard their names. Then I went to a book to read about them. This is what I might have read: In a country to the south there lived a jaguar and a tropical bird with bright plumage. One day they got married and soon afterwards there were born two daughters. When the revolution came, the jaguar and the tropical bird fought bravely but they were both killed . . . (p. 116)

In the same essay, Wollen moves from this emotional and evocative mode to a highly rational, straightforward tone:

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While Wollen experiments with these fictional forms in his biographical analysis of Kahlo and Modotti, he inserts a theoretician's point of view in short stories such as "The Real Projective Plane" in which appears an ambiguous relationship between three authors: the author of the written text (Wollen), an ideal author/narrator (Wollen's Other?), and the author of a fragment found by the narrator. The interplay between these three "voices" comments most incisively on the place, nature and problematic of authorship today.

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In this final retrospective, Wollen contextualizes various theoretical constructs and methods of analysis such as Marxism, psychoanalysis, the work of the *Tel Quel* group, structuralism, etc. One of the more inventive comments is Wollen's description of Barthes's *S/Z* as a kind of rap over "the found sound of *Sarrasine*." Who else could think of Barthes as a DJ? Wollen adds, "If *S/Z* is para-literature for one sub-culture, rap is para-music for another."

Readings and Writings may just be as important to the development of current practices in semiotics as was *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* in 1968. The collection is hardly a rewriting (or recanting) of Wollen's earlier groundbreaking work. Rather, it is an honest chronicle and an evaluation of an evolving field of study. Wollen may be setting sail for uncharted oceans, but those are always the most rewarding. "It's a long trip, we are the only riders." —LULU McCARROLL AND FABRICE ZIOLKOWSKI

STUDYING VISUAL COMMUNICATION

By Sol Worth, ed. by Larry Gross. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981. $20.00 cloth, $9.95 paper.

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A certain insularity surrounds much recent film scholarship. In many cases the assumption seems to be that film study is important because film is or at least was important. And,

if film is not quite as important as it was, film study has become all the more important—based upon an academic and institutional infrastructure largely created in the last 20 years with sufficient mass and scope to self-justify its own enterprise as the advancement of film scholarship. This allows scholars to talk to one another about something "important" whose importance need not be demonstrated but merely asserted, whose greatest importance may now be in terms of the institutional survival of scholars themselves. This has a somewhat more circular and potentially formalist ring to it than older justifications which prompted authors to address that larger public to whom film was indeed important or that broad spectrum of scholars and intellectuals for whom modern culture, including film, held importance. But the Griersons, Bazins, Warshows, Macdonalds and Sontags have become a minority tradition. Unfortunately, those who march along banging the drum loudly for the study of film because it is now a bona fide "discipline" with its own complex problematics may encounter the same fate as those in other academic disciplines like classics, English literature or history. They too once spoke to a vital aspect of the daily lives of their constituency but have since become primarily conservators of a great but increasingly moribund tradition. At the very moment when film studies threatens to become the classical studies department of the twentieth century, preserving and championing a tradition and range of achievements that lack contemporary vitality, that are less and less a part of everyday experience (compared to electronic communications from network television to word processing), we find our academic marketplace cluttered with increasingly recondite, narrow-minded, formalistic and derrière-garde studies, garbed perhaps in all new, bigger and better methodologies, but essentially hermetic and backward-looking.

Sol Worth belongs to another tradition. The essays collected here after his death by Larry Gross, written over a 20-year period, exhibit a ceaseless effort to justify and explain the central importance of film to the larger, fundamental issue of visual communication. For this reason, the bulk of Worth's writings are not directed to film studies specialists but to those in other disciplines to whom Worth speaks as a proselytizer, apologist and sometimes gadfly (for example, "In the past, the field of anthropology could get away with training visual illiterates to study verbal illiterates"—p. 95). Worth does not try to employ, improve or debate the leading edge of film theory or criticism. Instead he tries to persuade and cajole the nonspecialist, particularly those in the social sciences and education, that their unexamined assumptions about visual communication are inadequate if not wrong and need to be replaced with some understanding of film semiotics as a formally complex and culturally specific way of communicating. If such a goal leads to errors on the side of oversimplification or naïveté (and Worth often does sound quite unsophisticated to the specialist's ear), it also confronts a challenge the sophisticated too often prefer to shy away from: convincing those who do not already share their own assumptions or methods that they could be of genuine value to them as well.

Worth is also something of a loner, in the manner of a Siegfried Kracauer. His essays are spotted with references to important works but his emphasis on communication over aesthetics and on culture but no ideology leaves him outside the arena of most recent film work, broadly or narrowly conceived. His terms and concepts may seem quaint, as is his discussion of narrative structure as a "Story Organism," but they sometimes echo or improve on distinctions made elsewhere: his development of the difference between *attributing* meaning to events that lack any apparent signifying intention (a tree bending in the wind, for example) and *inferring* meaning from those that do (a photograph) has broad usefulness. He cites a series of experiments showing that younger children do not infer from a set of photographs that a figure identifiable as a doctor is a bad doctor because he ignores an accident victim. Instead they attribute goodness to the doctor on the basis of previous knowledge or socializing about doctors. Older children read the images in their specificity and infer that this particular doctor has acted badly, in this instance at least (pp. 142–145). Though Worth doesn't make the connection, this distinction seems to relate nicely to less testable theories about

the imaginary and symbolic realms and to a blockage that occurs when individuals attribute fixed, stereotypical meanings to certain classes of people: like second-graders, bigots, sexists and homophobes attribute meanings rather than infer them.

Worth's book then is of definite value, but perhaps of greatest value for that broader, less specialized audience he openly addresses, which could certainly include those just being introduced to film studies as well as the more advanced scholar who wishes to be reminded of the challenge and rewards of speaking to those outside his/her particular academic sub-set. The works of greatest value, like Bazin's or Barthes's, seem to be able to speak to specialist and nonspecialist alike, compellingly. If Worth fails to compell his reader, he at least chooses the road less taken, and that is entirely to his credit.

—BILL NICHOLS

Atkins, Irene Kahn. *Source Music in Motion Pictures.* East Brunswick, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983. $22.50. A discussion of film music which the characters can hear. Atkins has no new theoretical notions to propose, but she gives a survey of variant styles and technical features of diegetic music, and includes some fascinating materials about the creation of the opera scene in *Kane* and Kaper's score for *Lord Jim* (which was originally to include a good deal of actual gamelan music). With an extensive bibliography. A useful addition to the growing literature on the sound track. —E.C.

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The most significant aspect of this study is the challenge to Oudart's "system of the suture"—the idea that the spectator identifies with the glance of the offscreen character who, in the shot-reverse-shot structure, alternately appears and disappears. Where Oudart's analysis assigns authority of point of view to character, Browne assigns it to an implied narrator who articulates the spectator's position with respect to the story and its characters. Unfortunately, Browne's book omits the nuts and bolts work of explaining the theoretical background and context for his work. (He does not, for example, explain the history of Oudart's "system of the suture" or its importance and application to film studies.) Such pith may be appropriate to the Harvard dissertation that Browne originally wrote but it is unfortunate in book form, especially a book with so exalted a title and so impressive in the short analyses it does offer. But it is the apparent format of this University Microfilms International "Studies in Cinema Series" to publish dissertations in their original form. This seems a disservice to both authors and readers, especially when a work is as centrally important as Browne's.

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For several years now Arthur Asa Berger has been attempting to prove that the popular arts can survive the rigors of academic analysis, and as a professor of media criticism at San Francisco State has published books on subjects ranging from television to Li'l Abner. (He followed his most popular text, *The Comic-Stripped American,* with one called *The TV-Guided American,* confirming that other dictum, "Nothing succeeds like excess.")

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Thus a *Vogue* advertisement for Benandré leads to a semiotic meditation on dry skin as "a sign of a woman who is not sexually responsive—and who may also be sterile . . ." A football game becomes a subject for psychoanalysis, in which the offensive team represents the Id, the officials the Ego and the defense the Superego. All-news radio stations become "signifiers of a malaise in American culture," whose listeners are trapped by "the American capitalistic economic system, which generates anxiety and thus a need for constant surveillance." And so on.

As these examples would indicate, Berger does not pursue ideas so much as he chases them, forcing them to light on subjects that do not always bear their weight. The informed reader is put off by the facile generalizing, while the uninformed is left thoroughly confused, if not completely misled.

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With equal poise, different chapters penetrate the ambience of location shooting (Wellman's *Beggars of Life,* 1928); the social backwash of the Hearst-Davies set; the movie-acting skills of Humphrey Bogart and Louise Brooks. We readers who compete with the author as film journalists will be relieved to note her one critical limitation, in that she seems to need some sort of autobiographical connection with her proposed topic, to fire her up. The one wrongheaded chapter in the book ("Gish and Garbo") is the one where she has the least firsthand knowledge of the people she discusses.

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and closing chapters to close a narrative circle.)

She had a dancer's tough conditioning, and she tends to grade movie people not on lovability, in the traditional manner of film books, but in terms of their individual professionalism. She is not reductive, and the serious talents (Wellman, Wally Beery) come off well. When she compares, as comedy directors, Chaplin with her talented first husband, Eddie Sutherland, we never read the word "genius": only references to Chaplin's superior advance preparation, powers of concentration, and avoidance of the bottle.

On the now legendary "Louise Brooks" of *Pandora's Box* and *Diary of a Lost Girl,* she is critically as tough as she is elsewhere in the book on Bogart or James Quirk. (Quirk was the editor of *Photoplay* who derogated Gish, Brooks thinks, for pay from Metro, to help ease Gish out and Garbo in as the new class-act at Metro.) The Berlin chapter records Pabst treating her as an amateur: no technical discussions of her performance, plus off-the-set policing of her behavior to protect her appearance in the rushes.

She disagrees, but she records the judgment here of men like Pabst and Wellman warning her she wasn't professionally hungry enough to make it in Hollywood, be a Crawford or a Streisand. She took the lead in *Pandora's Box* (1929) from the young unknown Dietrich but by 1930-31 she lost another role to Jean Harlow (*Public Enemy*). These two events seem to frame the Legend, before she declined into a mere good critic, an anthropologist of the Legends like the rest of us.

—J. M. PURCELL

THE *CINEASTE* INTERVIEWS

Edited by Dan Georgakas and Lenny Rubenstein. Chicago: Lake View Press, 1983. $11.95.

This collection of selected interviews from *Cineaste*'s pages over the last fifteen years is an invaluable reference work for people writing about cinema and may even offer the mildly interested film-goer a perspective on what is intrinsically political about the entertaining or not-so-entertaining film-makers who discuss here their intentions and accomplishments. Interviews with directors as diverse as John Sayles and Krzysztof Zanussi seem to sum up the *Cineaste* range, and credit must be extended to the unnamed interviewers who delve into the oeuvre of the interviewees with informed curiosity.

Even critics get their day in court: Molly Haskell, Andrew Sarris, and Vincent Canby discuss the value and power of their work. A producer who can be categorized as "progressive" holds forth, and writers comment on their collaboration. *Cineaste* seems to have chosen extremely influential collaborators: writers John Berger (Alain Tanner's colleague) and Jorge Semprun (Alain Resnais's best writer) reveal the aspirations of directors in a way the directors themselves cannot, because, as Roger Ebert points out in his Foreword, "the philosopher emerges only in the post-mortem interview."

An unusual feature is the inclusion of several interviews with the same director over a period of years. Costa-Gavras's three expositions on the nature of political cinema have a logical and chronological development that leads unerringly to *Missing*. Bertolucci speaks twice of the poetry of class struggle; his explanation here of Italian Catholic Communism is one of the most succinct and best-formulated explanations of that phenomenon to appear in print. And there are refreshing moments like Jane Fonda's response to *Cineaste*'s "There have been suggestions that you should play famous revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg and Emma Goldman." "I'm very wary," says the once-burned, twice-shy Jane, "of playing any role which makes me look like I view myself as La Pasionaria. I would rather play a fascist, if that exposed something about racism and power, than play a famous revolutionary." It is this balance between the psychological and the political on the levels of both life and art that keeps *Cineaste* interviews on the cutting edge of film criticism. —KAREN JAEHNE

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As every programmer for a financially-borderline revival house or university film society knows, there are certain motion pictures that

and closing chapters to close a narrative circle.)

She had a dancer's tough conditioning, and she tends to grade movie people not on lovability, in the traditional manner of film books, but in terms of their individual professionalism. She is not reductive, and the serious talents (Wellman, Wally Beery) come off well. When she compares, as comedy directors, Chaplin with her talented first husband, Eddie Sutherland, we never read the word "genius": only references to Chaplin's superior advance preparation, powers of concentration, and avoidance of the bottle.

On the now legendary "Louise Brooks" of *Pandora's Box* and *Diary of a Lost Girl,* she is critically as tough as she is elsewhere in the book on Bogart or James Quirk. (Quirk was the editor of *Photoplay* who derogated Gish, Brooks thinks, for pay from Metro, to help ease Gish out and Garbo in as the new class-act at Metro.) The Berlin chapter records Pabst treating her as an amateur: no technical discussions of her performance, plus off-the-set policing of her behavior to protect her appearance in the rushes.

She disagrees, but she records the judgment here of men like Pabst and Wellman warning her she wasn't professionally hungry enough to make it in Hollywood, be a Crawford or a Streisand. She took the lead in *Pandora's Box* (1929) from the young unknown Dietrich but by 1930-31 she lost another role to Jean Harlow (*Public Enemy*). These two events seem to frame the Legend, before she declined into a mere good critic, an anthropologist of the Legends like the rest of us.

—J. M. PURCELL

THE *CINEASTE* INTERVIEWS

Edited by Dan Georgakas and Lenny Rubenstein. Chicago: Lake View Press, 1983. $11.95.

This collection of selected interviews from *Cineaste*'s pages over the last fifteen years is an invaluable reference work for people writing about cinema and may even offer the mildly interested film-goer a perspective on what is intrinsically political about the entertaining or not-so-entertaining film-makers who discuss here their intentions and accomplishments. Interviews with directors as diverse as John Sayles and Krzysztof Zanussi seem to sum up the *Cineaste* range, and credit must be extended to the unnamed interviewers who delve into the oeuvre of the interviewees with informed curiosity.

Even critics get their day in court: Molly Haskell, Andrew Sarris, and Vincent Canby discuss the value and power of their work. A producer who can be categorized as "progressive" holds forth, and writers comment on their collaboration. *Cineaste* seems to have chosen extremely influential collaborators: writers John Berger (Alain Tanner's colleague) and Jorge Semprun (Alain Resnais's best writer) reveal the aspirations of directors in a way the directors themselves cannot, because, as Roger Ebert points out in his Foreword, "the philosopher emerges only in the post-mortem interview."

An unusual feature is the inclusion of several interviews with the same director over a period of years. Costa-Gavras's three expositions on the nature of political cinema have a logical and chronological development that leads unerringly to *Missing*. Bertolucci speaks twice of the poetry of class struggle; his explanation here of Italian Catholic Communism is one of the most succinct and best-formulated explanations of that phenomenon to appear in print. And there are refreshing moments like Jane Fonda's response to *Cineaste*'s "There have been suggestions that you should play famous revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg and Emma Goldman." "I'm very wary," says the once-burned, twice-shy Jane, "of playing any role which makes me look like I view myself as La Pasionaria. I would rather play a fascist, if that exposed something about racism and power, than play a famous revolutionary." It is this balance between the psychological and the political on the levels of both life and art that keeps *Cineaste* interviews on the cutting edge of film criticism. —KAREN JAEHNE

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As every programmer for a financially-borderline revival house or university film society knows, there are certain motion pictures that

can be relied upon to help pay the rent. "Flat rate" golden oldies like *Casablanca* and *Citizen Kane* are dependable revenue-enchancers for the conscientious exhibitor, and a lot easier to live with than pornography, the traditional last-ditch desperation tactic. The other sure-fire bet is a select group of offbeat titles known variously as "cult films" or "midnight movies," a list that includes *El Topo, Night of the Living Dead, Pink Flamingos, Eraserhead,* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*

J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum's *Midnight Movies* (not to be confused with the recently published book by Stuart Samuels, also entitled *Midnight Movies*) takes on the acknowledged hits of the late-night circuit and explains the distinctive ritual of midnight moviegoing. The authors share a penetrating intelligence, a methodology that marries Freud and Marx, and a capacity for lucid prose. Thus, despite the fact that only an introductory theoretical chapter and a section on George Romero are true co-compositions, the rhetoric throughout this most informative study is smoothly sustained. Hoberman, the *Village Voice*'s well-known "below Fourteenth Street" critic, provides characteristically astute pieces on the New York Underground, Alexandro Jodorowsky, and John Waters; Rosenbaum, the author of *Moving Places: A Life at the Movies,* ably treats *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and the career of David Lynch. The excellent, compact discussions of other late-night favorites—*Freaks, Reefer Madness, The Harder They Come, Glen or Glenda?* and *Performance,* among others—are likewise separately signed.

For both authors, the success of a midnight movie has to do with its "transgressing particular taboos" and "articulating a potent new fantasy." In addition, many of these films "offer an immediately relevant social metaphor." Thus *Rocky Horror* "recapitulates the sexual politics of the sixties," while *Eraserhead* addresses the seventies by rendering "the breakdown of a collective into atomized individuals." Similarly, the authors see *Night of the Living Dead* as "a remarkable vision of the late sixties" that confirms the audience's worst fears by "offering the most literal possible depiction of America devouring itself."

The above may sound like fairly standard cultural-historical film criticism, but what makes it more persuasive than the usual glib rationales for box-office success is an insistent focus on what is unique about their subject: the audience's part in the proceedings. Much of the authors' emphasis is on the experience of midnight moviegoing, the activities that make up this "most social form of filmgoing." Indeed, devoted attendance at late-night screenings has too much in common with religious ceremony—repeated weekly observances, a congregation of believers, group responses, and sacred images—to avoid the obvious metaphor. Like the (midnight) Catholic mass, midnight movies create and reassure a community of the faithful.

The midnight movie experience is best captured in a chapter on (what else?) *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and its cult. The audience response—those offerings of toast, toilet paper, and water balloons—is surely more interesting than the picture itself, a fact the authors acknowledge by paying as much attention to Sal Piro, the cult's high priest, as to Richard O'Brien, the show's nominal *auteur.* No other midnight movie has incited anything like *Rocky Horror*'s celebratory antics—something to be thankful for in the case of *Pink Flamingos*—but each in its own way can turn a group of spectators into a community of sorts. *Midnight Movies* is valuable not only because it tells how certain movies do this, but because it recognizes that this sense of fellowship is often more important than its occasion—the midnight movie.

—TOM DOHERTY

BAD AT THE BIJOU

By William R. Horner. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1982. $17.95.

What, William Horner asks, is the great attraction of the figure of evil in American film, in all our arts? Starting with a series of examples of allegories, moral tales drawn from anthropology and ancient history, Horner seeks an answer to that question in a series of entertaining profile/interviews of ten outstanding character heavies of the fifties, sixties, and seventies. Horner interviewed (by phone) Jack Elam, Neville Brand, Lee Van

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Cleef, Bo Hopkins, Luke Askew, Bill McKinney, Andrew Robinson, Robert Donner, L. Q. Jones, and Strother Martin. It is a distinguished group whose collective filmographies include the work of nearly every major American director from the post-WWII period, and they are, to a man, charming and cooperative.

The resulting volume is often amusing and thoroughly erudite. Unfortunately, Horner's erudition is, more often than not, dedicated to nonfilm areas—the opening chapter on the nature of our historical fascination with evil is learned, but the book is studded with odd judgments on the films in question. Horner, for example, is more conversant with a minor Van Cleef oater like *Posse From Hell* than he is with Fritz Lang's *Rancho Notorious,* which both he and interviewee Jack Elam dismiss offhandedly. Similarly, a copy-editor should have caught minor errors such as the consistent misspelling of Andrew McLaglen's last name. Moreover, any reader who comes to *Bad at the Bijou* in search of insights into the working methods of Aldrich, Fuller, Ford, Walsh, Leone *et al.,* will come away disappointed, for the most part. Horner is more concerned with how the actors under his scrutiny relate their own surprisingly calm off-camera demeanors to the depravity that they practice on the screen and, while they are a uniformly articulate group, none of the interviewees is particularly voluble on the subject of working methods.

The only directors who are depicted in detail are, not surprisingly, Don Siegel, about whom Andrew Robinson (Scorpio in Siegel's *Dirty Harry*) waxes eloquent, and Sam Peckinpah, who figures prominently in several anecdotes told by Jones and Martin. Indeed, the latter two, whose interviews close the main section of the book, are the most winning and informative of the ten.

As for Horner's central thesis, which emerges in a well-written and closely argued final chapter, it is his belief that the "heavies" provide us with a sort of negative point of identification, a vivid illustration of the evilness of wrong-doing and, in that way, serve a distinctly positive social purpose. Whether one buys that thesis or not, it is hard to gainsay the delights offered us by as talented a group of character actors as the ones under discussion. (One more quibble: where is Ernest Borgnine, who certainly belongs in this group?) —GEORGE ROBINSON

INDECENT EXPOSURE
A True Story of Hollywood and Wall Street

By David McClintick. New York: Morrow, 1982.

One of the most important realizations one comes to in a reading of *Indecent Exposure* is that, although limited in their theoretical assumptions or historiographical bracketing, essays of the muckracking kind can often be more informative than more "legitimate" academic writings on similar subjects. *Indecent Exposure,* which became a best-seller a year ago, is solid investigative journalism in the tradition of David Halberstam's *The Powers that Be* or William Manchester's *The Arms of Krupp.*

A brief re-cap of the action: in 1977, then head of production at Columbia David Begelman forges a check for $10,000 and is found to have embezzled a total of $75,000. Although chastised and hounded by company chief Alan Hirschfield, Begelman escapes practically unscathed through the influence of other members of the film community's power elite. The incident is eventually dubbed "Begelgate."

The facts and personalities which McClintick "exposes" in his traditional narrative aren't the heart of the study. Indeed, the book sometimes reads more like a novel than an investigation, more like Michelet or Dumas than a modern historian. But *Exposure* does tell us about centers of power in today's motion picture industry, how power is exercised and, most informative of all, how little has changed from the period of studio hegemony in the twenties, thirties and forties.

At one point McClintick outlines a few of the illusions under which, he explains, many people still labor. One of these is that by the seventies the film industry had become a "rational" business with streamlined and standardized methods of operations, this in contrast with the decision-making process of moguls such as Mayer, Goldwyn *et al.* McClintick argues that this is far from the truth. The process of film-making (including most aspects

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of production, distribution and exhibition) is still cloaked in mysterious practices.

Further myths surround the industry's power structure. McClintick claims, and Begelgate becomes his proof, that the power of the studio today is as strong, if not stronger on a number of fronts, than it was before divestiture in the late forties. McClintick also wants to prove that the titular heads of studios (even Mayer) always had to struggle with the money people (more often than not located in New York) and had nowhere near the autonomy they seemed to have.

Indecent Exposure is not in the league of scholarly or academic historical studies by the new breed of theory-conscious historians such as Douglas Gomery. However, the book remains good raw material. Under its classical narrative organization are facts crucial to an understanding of how a segment of the motion picture industry functions today. Not to be (dis)missed. —FABRICE ZIOLKOWSKI

THE ENTERTAINMENT MACHINE
American Show Business in the Twentieth Century

By Robert C. Toll. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. $29.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

Toll explores the interaction of American culture, its entertainment and technology. In some respects this is a successor to his delightful 1976 book *On With The Show,* which examined America's nineteenth-century live entertainment in its myriad forms—the circus, vaudeville, burlesque, etc. The introduction of this new book recapitulates developments of the earlier century; indeed, some illustrations are carried over from one volume to the other.

However, the entertainment *machine* is aptly named. Toll describes the technology arising in the late nineteenth century that has so shaped our times. His first chapter is on the machine in the theater—the motion pictures; the second, the machine in the home—records, radio and television. He relates each medium to the other and these in turn to issues of class, economics, etc. He notes that by the thirties the battle for mass audiences became a battle between entertainment machines.

The rest of the book looks at genres (westerns, crime, musicals and comedy) and topics (popular music and sexuality) as they are transformed passing through the machines. He relates these transformations to social, economic and political developments. He hazards some modest projections about their futures. Future research efforts need to establish links to the literature of the period—not only books, but also the concurrent handling of genres in dime novels, pulp magazines etc. He cites secondary sources but he has used them effectively for an analysis which is lucid and well-written.

There are two sections of wide-ranging and interesting illustrations. There is also an 8-page bibliographic essay. The works cited are mostly books well-known to readers with interests in these areas.

There is a worthwhile exploration of the "American people's seemingly endless demand for popular entertainment." Cultural analysts are increasingly aware of the importance of entertainment as a clue to understanding. Toll effectively brings in the technological dimension. Someday (it is to be hoped) these will seem primitive beginnings in cultural analysis—but meanwhile Toll's work deserves careful reading. —RAOUL KULBERG

FILM ACTING
The Techniques and History of Acting for the Camera

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should . . . determine what his relationship with the camera will be." "For work in historical films or westerns, the actor should supplement whatever information the script gives with his own research." "During his first reading of the script, the actor should note any inconsistencies that appear in character development."

I doubt that much of O'Brien's book would be of value to real actors, who would do better if they performed in a local theater, attended a dramatic school, and went to a few movies. The book also lacks any theoretical or historical perspective that might have made it interesting to scholars. It quotes Stanislavsky often, adopting an uncritical notion of psychological realism which has been the basis for "good" Hollywood acting since the late fifties, and it mentions Pudovkin and Grotowski without making distinctions between them. It oversimplifies its description of the classic movie stars, often confusing the star's image with the complexity of his actual roles. For example it says that Peter Lorre was an unchanging type or "personality," forgetting that Lorre was an important actor for Brecht and Lang, and that there is a big difference between Joel Cairo and Mr. Moto.

On the other hand, O'Brien does a good job of explaining the actual mechanics of acting for the movies, and is perceptive about the differences between playing for the camera and playing for a live audience. She might have been more successful if she had addressed herself to a sophisticated movie audience, or to those critics who seldom think carefully about the actual work actors do, being too preoccupied with what goes on behind the camera. She is good at suggesting the purely physical complexities of a modern movie set, and at describing the practical skills involved in acting for a camera that might dolly in for a close-up at one moment only to back away at the next. She also quite properly emphasizes the actor's ability to invent character traits or business for a role, and she cites some interesting examples from recent films. Her book could have provided a basic introduction for movie viewers, acquainting them with the techniques and assumptions that underlie Hollywood performance. As it stands, however, it has only a marginal interest. —JAMES NAREMORE

FILM INDIA
The New Generation

Ed. by Uma da Cunha. Directorate of Film Festivals, Lok Nayak Bhavan, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003, India.

The long-established commercial cinema in India produces fantasies, in which, to quote a successful commercial director, "there are no beggars . . . fate is kind and god is busy looking after his flock" (pp. 26-27). The best fantasies are often energetic, moving rapidly from episode to episode, presenting heroes and heroines in numerous changes of costume and numerous situations of combat, but the effect of the fantasies is to induce stupor. They provide viewers relief from the daily grind and thereby reconcile them to the daily grind. The "new" cinema in India (dating from the first films of Satyajit Ray) insists on reality. The best "new" films may emphasize the complexity both within and outside characters, but they require characters to make choices in the face of complexity. In a culture oppressed by the idea of fate, the new films investigate the scope and function of individual choice. Even a person who takes no interest in India might watch the new films to see what room they discover for human purposefulness in nearly impossible circumstances.

Film India: The New Generation, 1960–1980 was compiled and edited by Uma de Cunha of Bombay to accompany the pioneering exhibition of new Indian cinema at the Museum of Modern Art in September 1981. The exhibition was last of a three-part series called *Film India,* the first part consisting of a complete Ray retrospective and the second of selected historical films from India's National Film Archives. The volume includes several general essays on the Indian ethos and the place of film within that ethos, biographical information about directors whose films were features in the MOMA exhibition, synopses of featured films, and complete filmographies. So the volume is immediately useful as a reference work on the new Indian cinema (exclusive of Ray, who is treated in a companion volume, *Film India: Satyajit Ray,* also obtainable on request from the Film Festival Directorate in New Delhi.) But a person who reads the volume through will find it more lively than most reference works. A curious reader can overhear in the biographies of the directors an agitated conversation going on in Indian culture about the uses of film and the purposes of art.

The nineteen directors included in *The New Generation* differ markedly about how reality is to be presented to viewers. One can discern at least four principal approaches:

(1) *the neo-realism* of films like M.S. Sathyu's *Garm Hava* (*Scorching Wind,* 1974), which maintain the scale of ordinary life and devise a framework of fiction for documentary footage or a documentary style.

(2) *political melodramas,* as in the work of Shyam Benegal, Saeed Mirza, Govind Nihalani. These films employ the episodic, action-filled, musical

should . . . determine what his relationship with the camera will be." "For work in historical films or westerns, the actor should supplement whatever information the script gives with his own research." "During his first reading of the script, the actor should note any inconsistencies that appear in character development."

I doubt that much of O'Brien's book would be of value to real actors, who would do better if they performed in a local theater, attended a dramatic school, and went to a few movies. The book also lacks any theoretical or historical perspective that might have made it interesting to scholars. It quotes Stanislavsky often, adopting an uncritical notion of psychological realism which has been the basis for "good" Hollywood acting since the late fifties, and it mentions Pudovkin and Grotowski without making distinctions between them. It oversimplifies its description of the classic movie stars, often confusing the star's image with the complexity of his actual roles. For example it says that Peter Lorre was an unchanging type or "personality," forgetting that Lorre was an important actor for Brecht and Lang, and that there is a big difference between Joel Cairo and Mr. Moto.

On the other hand, O'Brien does a good job of explaining the actual mechanics of acting for the movies, and is perceptive about the differences between playing for the camera and playing for a live audience. She might have been more successful if she had addressed herself to a sophisticated movie audience, or to those critics who seldom think carefully about the actual work actors do, being too preoccupied with what goes on behind the camera. She is good at suggesting the purely physical complexities of a modern movie set, and at describing the practical skills involved in acting for a camera that might dolly in for a close-up at one moment only to back away at the next. She also quite properly emphasizes the actor's ability to invent character traits or business for a role, and she cites some interesting examples from recent films. Her book could have provided a basic introduction for movie viewers, acquainting them with the techniques and assumptions that underlie Hollywood performance. As it stands, however, it has only a marginal interest. —JAMES NAREMORE

FILM INDIA
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form of the commercial cinema to present harsh realities, such as the corruption of politicians, the oppression of tribals and the indignities suffered by Indian women. In films like Nihalani's *Akrosh* (*The Cry of the Wounded,* 1981), the pace is brisk and oppressors and victims are easily distinguishable; the shallow field of the *mise-en-scène* simplifies realities. The effect of political melodrama is to make people restless for change.

(3) *Brechtian cinema,* as in the work of Mrinal Sen and Ketan Mehta. Films like Sen's *Akaler Sandhane* (*In Search of Famine,* 1980), and Ketan Mehta's *Bhavani Bhavai* (*A Folktale,* 1980), pull the viewer deep into a story and suddenly push him out, thereby (or so the theory goes) alerting the viewer to his own susceptibility to fantasy.

(4) *complex films,* which present both the many-sidedness of an event as well as a point of view. Even when the films are contemplative, like Aravindan's *Kanchana Sita* (*Golden Sita,* 1977), their perspective is not God's, but that of a human who must act after he or she understands the energies running under the surface of events. The preference for complexity is shared by the films of Ray, the later films of Aravindan and Mani Kaul, Pattabhi Rama Reddy's *Samskara* (*Funeral Rites,* 1970), and B.V. Karanth's impassioned *Chomana Dudi* (Choma's Drum, 1974—a grievous omission from the otherwise representative MOMA selection). These films are fine cinema even for people unfamiliar with India. They assimilate to themselves as much of the culture as their stories depend on, they work on several levels, and events and transitions within these films seem fully necessary.

The biographies in *The New Generation* make it clear that the different approaches sketched above are less manifestations of the unconscious bent of a director than strategies. The various directors argue with one another over which approach will awaken viewers. Saeed Mirza wants flat rather than round characters for his story; "his fondest wish is to achieve a cinema of ideas" unencumbered by the interaction of life-like characters (126). On the other hand, Kumar Shahani is dead against "using characters as puppets, or gadgets, or just for graphic purposes" (169). Some directors wish to reach a wide audience, however corrupted its present taste. They argue for the value of a middle cinema. "The Big Bad Wolf of commercialism is no nightmare to Basu Chatterjee . . . 'A fusion of Art and Commerce is best and one struggles to achieve this whatever the pitfalls,' he says" (61). Other directors, like Mani Kaul, require high internal consistency in their films, even at the cost of popularity. "For his latest . . . film . . . he says in great glee that he stood outside the empty [New Delhi] theater offering his ten free passes to unsuspecting pedestrians, who when they heard his name, fled in the opposite direction" (114).

The New Generation is the first volume on recent Indian cinema available in English. The arrangement of material in the volume makes the new directors strangely accessible. They become flesh and blood persons, breathing the dust of Indian streets in their noses, trying very hard to discover through their films what it is that people in India must do next. —SATTI KHANNA

Atwell, David. *Cathedrals of the Movies.* London: Architectural Press, 1980. An affectionate history of British movie houses and their designs. Like ours, they have art deco and Moorish palaces, but also Georgian, Indian and Italian Rennaissance fantasies. —J.F.

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Karton, Joshua, ed. *Film Scenes for Actors.* New York: Bantam, 1983. $3.95. Seventy scenes that offer good material for performers to play with (all drawn, incidentally, from scripts that are *not* adaptations from plays). As Karton points out, they are long as film scenes go, though the shortest only run about 3½ minutes. Enjoyable to read as well as study or work with, they can also be fun just to run through with friends (a *lot* more fun than what comes out of the tube). —E.C.

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LaVine, W. Robert. *In a Glamorous Fashion: The Fabulous Years of Hollywood Costume Design.* New York: Scribner's, 1982. $12.95 paper. A survey of the evolution of the art, followed by brief chapters on leading practitioners. The photos are predictably sumptuous, and include some behind-the-scenes shots of costume department workrooms and meticulously gowned actresses resting on specially built angled boards so as not to get anything creased. —E.C.

Lenburg, Jeff, Joan Howard Maurer, and Greg Lenburg: *The Three Stooges Scrapbook.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1982. $18.95. This is an "authorized history" of the Stooges act (it actually involved six performers over the years) that forms the low end of my personal scale of screen comedy. As Moe remarked early on, "We did stupid things but they were excusable because we didn't know any better." If you want to be reminded just how great Keaton, Chaplin, and Laurel & Hardy were, this book may do something for you. —E.C.

Lehman, Ernest. *Screening Sickness and Other Tales of Tinsel Town.* New York: Perigee Books, 1982. $6.95. The highs and lows of Ernest Lehman's writing—from the sparkling screenplays for *North By Northwest* and *Sweet Smell of Success* to the relatively banal theatrical translations of *West Side Story, The Sound of Music,* and *Hello Dolly!*—are also represented in this collection of essays on Hollywood and movies in general. At times Lehman's satirical parries are right on target; it's always refreshing to see a nasty swipe at a nasty critic, and one section on the terminology of film production is really very funny. But most of Lehman's targets are too close to his own heart for any humor to develop. The smell of success is apparently much too sweet. —EDWARD SIKOV

Marsden, Michael T., Nachbar, John G., and Grogg, Sam L., Jr. *Movies as Artifacts: Cultural Criticism of Popular Film.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982. Cloth $22.95, paper $11.95. The editors of the *Journal of Popular Film* have assembled this collection of thoughtful essays on the relations between movies and their audiences. They range from a poetic evocation of the life of Audie Murphy (Julian Smith) through a study of the ghetto appeal of *kung fu* movies (Stuart Kaminsky) to a study of early movie audiences (Garth Jowett). The aim in most of the pieces is to connect the themes of American films with widespread popular concerns—something too little done in ordinary criticism, the editors argue. —E.C.

May, John R. and Michael Bird, eds. *Religion in Film.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982. $16.50, $7.95 paper. Intelligent essays on religious features of a wide variety of films. —E.C.

McArthur, Colin, ed. *Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television.* London: BFI, 1982. £3.25 paper. A miscellany of essays on how Scotland has fared in literature and film, concluding with thoughts on what Scottish TV might be like in an age of nationalism. —E.C.

Monaco, Paul. *Modern European Culture and Consciousness, 1870–1980.* Albany: State University of New York Press. 1983. $30.50 cloth, $8.95 paper. A sturdy defense of the continuing vitality of European culture, with occasional excursions into films. —E.C.

Munn, Mike. *The Stories Behind the Scenes of the Great Film Epics.* London: The Illustrated Publications Company, Ltd. (available through Frederick Ungar, New York), 1983. $11.95, paper. Production anecdotes, from *Ben Hur* to *Jesus of Nazareth,* with lots of pictures. —E.C.

Pettigrew, Terence. *British Film Character Actors: Great Names and Memorable Moments.* Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1982. $22.50. Chatty, random comments about selected films in which some sixty British actors have appeared, with comments on the evolution of their careers. —E.C.

Strich, Christian, ed. *Fellini's Faces.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982. $12.95 paper. A gallery of 418 photos from Fellini's archives—taken during casting or shooting, and giving the full gamut from stars to his characteristically grotesque extras. The photos are often lovely in themselves, but unfortunately the photographers' names are omitted—probably because lost. —E.C.

Taylor, Geoffrey. *Paul Mazursky's Tempest.* New York: Zoetrope, 1982. $10.95, paper. A luxuriously produced memento book, with design sketches, photos from the film, and production stills illustrating various documents and interview quotes bearing on the film's long history. Everybody has lots to say (of a rather woolly nature—you begin to see why the film turned out the way it did) except for Susan Sarandon and Molly Ringwald, who are the best things in the picture and evidently didn't want to incriminate themselves. —E.C.

Teti, Frank and Karen Moline. *Streisand: Through the Lens.* New York: Delilah, 1982. $8.95 paper. A photo book enlivened by interviews with the photographers who have pursued Streisand over the years, revealing a curious love/hate symbiosis. —E.C.

Thomas, Sari. *Film/Culture.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1982. A group of 17 previously unpublished essays on various social-science approaches to film: its industrial base, its conventions and style, and its audience. —E.C.

Thompson, John O., ed. *Monty Python Complete and Utter Theory of the Grotesque.* London: British Film Institute (available through NY Zoetrope), 1982. $7.50. This "dossier" on the Monty Python team comprises press clippings, learned reflections from art critics, Ruskin, Melanie Klein, Bakhtin, Lacan, *et al.,* and interview snippets. The different kinds of material play off each other in a pleasantly bizarre (if only intermittently grotesque) way, and will give any Python fan a good deal to think about, some of it quite unwelcome. Nicely produced in 52 pages plus six pages of Pythonography and bibliography. —E.C.

Weinberg, Herman G. *A Manhattan Odyssey: A Memoir,* and *Coffee Brandy and Cigars.* New York: Anthology Film Archives, 491 Broadway, New York 10012, 1983. Cloth $20.00 and $16.00; paper $10.00 and $8.00. Weinberg appears on the jacket of his memoir in a pixy-like photo, with wispy white hair and heavy-framed glasses, his eyes shining playfully. He is a familiar elder of the film world, friend to many of the great, generous and crusty by turns, opinionated, witty, capable both of terse, elegant phrases ("No one writes about Newark [his childhood home] and for good reason") and of petty, crabby complaints about the degeneracy of the times. He had a long career as manager of early art theaters, subtitler, journalist, and later as visiting dignitary at festivals and other film-world celebrations. The memoir volume of this set reveals his personal history: two marriages that ended tragically—one by what he considers his own idiocy and one by death, his raising of his beloved daughter, and his various adventures. His avant-garde film, *Autumn Fire,* was made to win him his first wife, an usherette (as was his second); it now reposes in many distinguished collections. The person who comes through the stories is an avid reader and a collector of people, impressions, phrases; he stitches his life together with films, books, and music—a man of culture in a sense now almost extinct. A certain sexism endemic to his times leers out throughout the book, and as raconteur Weinberg makes no pretense at deep analysis of his own character or life. But to anyone who spends much time thinking about the film world these will be mostly endearing volumes—mementoes of a lively man who has lived his life vividly. (The second volume is a collection of unrelated tidbits that never got into his columns.)

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Wilson, James C. *Vietnam in Prose and Film.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1982. $18.95. Wilson concludes that many books (fiction or not) did nothing but "contribute to the misunderstanding of a crucially important event." As for films, "By and large" most "derealized the war. . . ." The exceptions? In prose they are Frances Fitzgerald's *Fire in the Lake* and Gloria Emerson's *Winners and Losers.* Gareth Porter's *Vietnam: A History in Documents* proved useful for a little quick documentation; *Setting the Stage,* Volume I of the Time-Life illustrated history *The Vietnam Experience* was hit up for some stats. In film there is only one exception: Peter Davis's *Hearts and Minds.* (Don't be fooled by the "filmography" at the back, which includes many documentary films: none is discussed except Davis's.)

What then do we have here? An anti-Vietnam war diatribe (after the fact) masquerading as a book about literature and film of the Vietnam war, one not concerned with "formalistic analysis" (the term is never defined) or literary and cinematic history, a work fairly ignorant of the social, political and historical "background" of the Vietnamese people (Jeffrey Race's anthropological *War Comes to Long An* merely a "personal narrative"?), to say nothing about its ignorance of the American people, written by an (American) author who "Like Alden Pyle . . . got hold of an idea and altered every situation to fit the idea."

—PETER McINERNEY

French Film Books 1981-1982

by Paul R. Michaud

The following books, most of which were published during the past year, are but a selection of the hundreds of titles that appeared in France during that period of time; despite the parlous state of the French economy, the film book publishing business seems to have been in an unusually good shape. While already existing collections such as those of Lherminier, Hatier, Veyrier, Denoel and Gallimard/*Cahiers du Cinéma* continued to issue titles, new and innovative collections appeared at L'Equerre, Edilig, L'Atalante and Le Sycomore. Of special note, Editions du Cerf, the publisher that had won a certain reknown in the 1950s for its publication of André Bazin's four-volume *What is Cinéma?,* among other film titles, rejoined the fold with its publication of Maurice Drouzy's monumental *Carl Th. Dreyer, né Nilsson.*

If quantitatively the 1981-82 publishing season proved successful, it was no less so qualitatively: in this category the highlights were undoubtedly Drouzy's *Dreyer,* joined by Claude Gauteur's compilation of the *Oeuvres de cinéma inédites* of Jean Renoir, Maurice Bessy's *Orson Welles* and Michel Ciment's *Les Conquérants d'un nouveau monde.*

If one byproduct of the French recession was the steep increase in the price of film books (some of them are unusually high), then another, *en revanche,* was the revaluation upward of the dollar: at this writing, the dollar was worth more than seven francs, thus making the net price of a French film book for an American buyer relatively low. When available, the price in francs is indicated; on the

Weinberg, Herman G. *A Manhattan Odyssey: A Memoir,* and *Coffee Brandy and Cigars.* New York: Anthology Film Archives, 491 Broadway, New York 10012, 1983. Cloth $20.00 and $16.00; paper $10.00 and $8.00. Weinberg appears on the jacket of his memoir in a pixy-like photo, with wispy white hair and heavy-framed glasses, his eyes shining playfully. He is a familiar elder of the film world, friend to many of the great, generous and crusty by turns, opinionated, witty, capable both of terse, elegant phrases ("No one writes about Newark [his childhood home] and for good reason") and of petty, crabby complaints about the degeneracy of the times. He had a long career as manager of early art theaters, subtitler, journalist, and later as visiting dignitary at festivals and other film-world celebrations. The memoir volume of this set reveals his personal history: two marriages that ended tragically—one by what he considers his own idiocy and one by death, his raising of his beloved daughter, and his various adventures. His avant-garde film, *Autumn Fire,* was made to win him his first wife, an usherette (as was his second); it now reposes in many distinguished collections. The person who comes through the stories is an avid reader and a collector of people, impressions, phrases; he stitches his life together with films, books, and music—a man of culture in a sense now almost extinct. A certain sexism endemic to his times leers out throughout the book, and as raconteur Weinberg makes no pretense at deep analysis of his own character or life. But to anyone who spends much time thinking about the film world these will be mostly endearing volumes—mementoes of a lively man who has lived his life vividly. (The second volume is a collection of unrelated tidbits that never got into his columns.)

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French Film Books 1981-1982

by Paul R. Michaud

The following books, most of which were published during the past year, are but a selection of the hundreds of titles that appeared in France during that period of time; despite the parlous state of the French economy, the film book publishing business seems to have been in an unusually good shape. While already existing collections such as those of Lherminier, Hatier, Veyrier, Denoel and Gallimard/*Cahiers du Cinéma* continued to issue titles, new and innovative collections appeared at L'Equerre, Edilig, L'Atalante and Le Sycomore. Of special note, Editions du Cerf, the publisher that had won a certain reknown in the 1950s for its publication of André Bazin's four-volume *What is Cinéma?,* among other film titles, rejoined the fold with its publication of Maurice Drouzy's monumental *Carl Th. Dreyer, né Nilsson.*

If quantitatively the 1981-82 publishing season proved successful, it was no less so qualitatively: in this category the highlights were undoubtedly Drouzy's *Dreyer,* joined by Claude Gauteur's compilation of the *Oeuvres de cinéma inédites* of Jean Renoir, Maurice Bessy's *Orson Welles* and Michel Ciment's *Les Conquérants d'un nouveau monde.*

If one byproduct of the French recession was the steep increase in the price of film books (some of them are unusually high), then another, *en revanche,* was the revaluation upward of the dollar: at this writing, the dollar was worth more than seven francs, thus making the net price of a French film book for an American buyer relatively low. When available, the price in francs is indicated; on the

whole, however, one should first write to place an order for a book, making payment only when billed.

Henri Agel, *Cinéma et nouvel naissance,* Albin Michel (Bibliothèque de l'Hermétisme), 22, rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris. A study of "rebirth" in the cinema, with especially interesting sections on the Western and the films of Robert Bresson.

Claude Autant-Lara, *Télémafia,* Editions Lefeuvre, 29 rue Pastorelli, 06000 Nice. Heavily documented account of Autant-Lara's efforts to film *La Chartreuse de Parme;* very revealing on the political aspects of making films in France.

Robert Benayoun, *Le Regard de Buster Keaton,* Editions Herscher, 53 rue Saint-Andre-des-Arts, 75006 Paris. Coffee table volume on Keaton, well-illustrated but expensive.

Maurice Bessy, *Orson Welles,* Editions Gerard Watelet (Collection Pygmalion), 70 avenue de Breteuil, 75007 Paris. 209 Francs. Another study of Welles, but this one by a longtime friend whose revelations are so pertinent that Welles attempted to have its publication blocked.

Gérard Betton, *Esthétique du Cinéma,* Presses universitaires de France, 90 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005 Paris. 18 Francs. Part of the "Que Sais-Je" collection, a well-summarized 128 pages on the film as art.

Albrecht Betz, *Musique et politique: Hanns Eisler,* Editions le Sycomore, 102 boulevard Beaumarchais, 75011 Paris. 86 Francs. On the composer of the musical score of *Night and Fog* and collaborator of Brecht.

Claude Beylie and Philippe Carcassonne, *Le Cinéma,* Editions Bordas, 17 rue Rémy-Dumoncel, 75014 Paris. Another in Bordas's very serious "Spectacles" collection, this one contains an extraordinary assortment of essays on the film by such authors as Henri Agel, Nestor Almendros. Luigi Comencini, Samuel Fuller, Alain Resnais, Eric Rohmer and Volker Schlöndorff. An encyclopedic, though somewhat original, approach to the medium.

Jean-Loup Bourget, *Le cinéma américain 1895–1980: De Griffith à Cimino,* Presses universitaires de France, 90 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005 Paris. A very scholarly, well-researched history of major trends of the American cinema.

M. Bouvier and Jean-Louis Leutrat, *Nosferatu,* Gallimard (Collection Cahiers du Cinéma), 5 rue Sebastien-Bottin, 75007 Paris. Excellent study, embodying an unusual approach to the Murnau masterpiece.

Adam Biro and René Passeron, *Dictionnaire général de surréalisme et de ses environs,* Presses universitaires de France, 90 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005 Paris. The most definitive study to date of a movement that manifested itself as often in the cinema as in literature; consequently, a significant portion of this work is devoted to the surrealist film (Dali, Buñuel, Man Ray, Légér, Dreyer, Cocteau, Gance).

Louise Brooks: Portrait d'une anti-star, Editions Phébus, 17 rue Pierre-Lescot, 75001 Paris. 145 Francs.

Freddy Buache, *Claude Autant-Lara,* L'Age d'Homme, Case postale 263, 1000 Lausanne 9, Switzerland. 68 Francs.

Luis Buñuel, *Mon dernier soupire,* Laffont, 6 place Saint-Sulpice, 75006 Paris. The collaboration of Buñuel and Jean-Claude Carrière (who wrote this book after discussions with Buñuel), which produced such works as *Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,* here results in a rather uneven book that certainly does not do justice to Buñuel.

Raymond Castans, André Bernard, *Les Films de Marcel Pagnol,* Julliard, 8 rue Garancière, 75006 Paris. 120 Francs.

Gilles Cèbe, *Fred Astaire,* Henri Veyrier, 12 rue du Nesle, 75006 Paris. An interesting, though particularly French, approach to Astaire and his films.

Gilles Cèbe, *Woody Allen,* Veyrier, 12 rue du Nesle, 75006 Paris. Another French study of Allen (there are several), but one that is worth reading.

Robert Chazal, *Gérard Depardieu, l'autodidacte inspiré,* Hatier, 59 boulevard Raspaid, 75006 Paris. 59 Francs. The first study of the French actor, preceded by a revealing interview with Depardieu.

Michel Ciment, *Les Conquérants d'un nouveau monde. Essais sur le cinéma américain,* Gallimard, 5 rue Sebastien-Bottin, 75007 Paris. One of the highlights of the French film book publishing season, a collection of Ciment's essays from *Positif* and elsewhere, but an inspired selection and one that provokes thought on the cinema of Hollywood. Inexpensive and unillustrated (it appears in Gallimard's *Idées* collection), but worth its weight in gold.

Cinéma pluriel, a new filmbook collection directed by Jean-Loup Passek, done in cooperation with the Georges Pompidou Center and published by Editions de l'Equerre, 117 rue Notre-Dame des Champs, 75006 Paris. Monographs that have appeared so far concern the Hungarian, Soviet and Danish cinemas, and the work of Jan Lenica and Joris Ivens.

Claude-Michel Cluny, *Dictionnaire des nouveaux cinémas arabes,* Sindbad (La Bibliothèque arabe), 1 rue Feutrier, 75018 Paris. 170 Francs. Although somewhat expensive, the definitive work, in French, on Arab cinema.

Younès Dadci, editor, *Première histoire du cinéma algérien 1896–1979,* Editions Dadci, 41 rue de la Chine, 75020 Paris. An overlong, somewhat politicized account of the birth and evolution of Algerian cinema, but one that so far remains unequalled and

is definitely worth consulting.

Jacques Deslandes, *le Boulevard du cinéma à l'époque de Georges Méliès,* Editions du Cerf, 29 boulevard Latour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris. By one of France's most underrated film historians, a very unusual account of the birth of French cinema.

Maurice Drouzy, *Carl Th. Dreyer né Nilsson,* Editions du Cerf, 29 boulevard Latour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris. 150 Francs. Probably *the* event of the current French film book publishing season, a heavily illustrated, oversized (though relatively inexpensive) biography of Carl-Theodor Dreyer that reveals a completely unknown (or misknown) phase of his life, his childhood, and attempts to propose a new interpretation of his work in the context of his early life. Its author, Maurice Drouzy, seems to have left no stone unturned in his quest for the early Dreyer, and the resultant book reads much like a mystery thriller. A prime candidate for translation into English. A highly recommended book.

Elie Faure, several texts on Abel Gance and Gance's *Napoléon,* in *Cahiers Elie Faure,* c/o Mme Chatelain, Les Roches, Le Perréon, 69830 Saint-Georges-de-Reneins. Faure's essays shed light on Gance's masterpiece as well as its director's little-known collaboration with Faure.

Charles Ford, *Cinema immobile,* Agfa-Gevaert, Division Cinéma et Communications audio-visuelles, 274 avenue Napoléon Bonaparte, 92500 Rueil-Malmaison. Volume one: 1910–1940; volume two: 1940–1970. By the French film historian, two very interesting tomes on the evolution of world cinema. The illustrations are more often than not unusual and unknown, the major part coming from Ford's personal collection.

Paul Fournel, editor, *Les Marionnettes,* Bordas, 17 rue Rémy-Dumoncel, 75014 Paris. 220 Francs. A superb collection of essays on the history of marionnettes, contains an excellent chapter on their relationship to the cinema, a subject heretofore very little written about.

Georges Franju, *Le Musée du Cinéma—Henri Langlois,* L'Avant-Scène, 27 rue Saint-André-des-Arts, 75006 Paris. 41 Francs. Franju's own account of his collaboration with Henri Langlois, founder of the Cinémathèuqe française, and his nominations (in image and text) of his candidates for an ideal cinémathèque.

Tay Garnett, *Portraits de Cinéastes. Un Siècle de Cinéma,* edited by Thierry de Navacelle, Hatier, 59 boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris. Although prepared in English by Garnett and de Navacelle, then a UCLA film student, and titled *Learn from the Masters,* this volume was unable to find an English-language publisher, and here makes its first appearance in French. It is composed of answers to a list of 23 questions sent by Garnett to the world's most prominent filmmakers. Although uneven, the replies are often unusual.

Jean A. Gili, *Luigi Comencini,* Edilig, 3 rue Récamier, 75341 Paris. 72 Francs. Part of a new collection that is overexpensive (for no special reason, the format is hardcover) Jean Gili's study of Comencini is better than most other entries in this collection. Contains an interview with Comencini, articles by the director, extracts from his screenplays, a bibliography and filmography. Illustrated.

Françoise Grazani, *La Presse du Cinéma,* Presse-Actualité, 5 rue Bayard, 75393 Paris, 20 Francs. A brief though thorough runthrough of the French film press.

D. W. Griffith, Editions de l'Equerre, 7 rue Dupuytren, 75006 paris. 146 Francs. A product of the international symposium held in December in Paris; contains the most complete catalogue of the work of Griffith.

Guy Hennebelle and Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron, editors, *Les Cinémas de l'Amérique latine,* Lherminier/Textimages, 28 bis rue d'Alsace, 92300 Levallois. 236 Francs. Although its price is somewhat steep, this is the first encyclopedic survey of Latin American cinema, one up to the usual quality of filmbooks published by Pierre Lherminier.

Ishagpour, *D'Une image à l'autre. La nouvelle modernité du cinéma,* Denoël/Gonthier, 19 rue de l'Université, 75007 paris. 29 Francs. Slightly obscure approach to the semiology of film.

Joris Ivens and Robert Destanque, *Joris Ivens ou la mémoire d'un regard,* Editions BFB, 40 rue du Cherche-Midi, 75006 Paris. 89 Francs. Ivens's memoirs, but much more: the autobiography of a vision of the world.

Francis Lacassin, *Tarzan,* Veyrier, 12 rue du Nesle, 75006 Paris. 148 Francs. Well-known for his erudition in film history, Lacassin here recreates the film life of one of cinema's best-known popular heroes.

Gérard Lenne, *Le Sexe à l'Ecran,* Veyrier, 12 rue du Nesle, 75006 Paris. New edition of a seminal work on erotic cinema. Heavily illustrated.

Philippe J. Maarek, *La Censure cinématographique,* LITEC, France, 27 place Dauphine, 75001 Paris. 90 Francs. On censorship in a country, France, that has seen much of it (even today) and in many forms, but also on how it has evolved in other countries, including the United States.

Joel Magny, *Théories du cinéma,* Editions de l'Harmattan, 7 rue de l'Ecole-Polytechnique, 75005 Paris. 45 Francs. A well-synthesized primer on film theory, representing the entire history and geographical range of the cinema.

André Malraux, Cahiers de l'Herne, 41 rue Verneuil, 75007 Paris.

Malthête-Méliès, *Essai de reconstitution du catalogue français de la Star-Film. Suivi d'une analyse catalographique des films de Georges Mélies recensés en France,* Publications du Service des Archives du Film du Centre national du cinéma, 78390 Bois

d'Arcy. Done by the family of George Méliès, the definitive listing of the known films of the French film pioneer. Unfortunately it is limited to prints of Méliès films extant in France; one hopes that the same approach can be taken to those films produced by Méliès in the United States and elsewhere.

René Noell, *Histoire du spectacle cinématographique à Perpignan de 1896 à 1944.* Preface by Jacques Deslandes. Palais des Congrès, 66000 Perpignan. Much in the style of Deslandes, a study of the film public in one French town during the early days of the cinema. An approach that hopefully shall be one day emulated in the United States.

Charles Pathé, *De Pathé Frères à Pathé Cinéma,* Serdoc-Premier Plan, 28 rue Villeray, 69003 Lyon. An inexpensive reprint of the memoirs of Charles Pathé, one of the fathers of French film as an industry, that originally was available only in a privately-printed edition.

Vincent Pinel, *Techniques du Cinéma,* Presses universitaires de France, 11 rue Jean de Beauvais, 75005 Paris. 18 Francs. An inexpensive introduction to the technical aspects of film. Pinel's version is a complete reworking of the classic work by Lo Duca.

Christian Plume, Xavier Pasquini, *Michel Simon,* Editions Alain Lefeuvre, 29 rue Pastorelli, 06000 Nice.

Positif, anniversary reprinting of the first seven numbers (1952–1953), Nouvelles éditions OPTA, 30 boulevard de Sebastopol, 75004 Paris. Though probably just as important as *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the role it played in the birth of the French *Nouvelle vague, Positif* never became as well known to foreign audiences. Beyond the historical significance of these first seven issues (until now unfindable and little known), they contain such items as special numbers on Jean Vigo and John Huston and articles by Henri Agel and Georges Sadoul.

René Prédal, *80 Ans de Cinéma. Nice et le Septième Art,* Editions Serre, 35 rue Rossini, 06000 Nice. Large format, and heavily illustrated, Prédal's tome provides an interesting introduction to an aspect of French cinema that is often little appreciated: the role played by Nice in the evolution of French, indeed world, cinema. Prédal's book is especially generous in the place it gives to the role played by American companies like MGM, and US directors like Rex Ingram, in the development of the film industry in Nice. An unusual book on an unusual subject.

Jean Renoir, *Oeuvres de cinéma inédites. Synopsis, traitements, continuités dialoguées, découpages,* Gallimard (Collection Cahiers du Cinéma). 5 rue Sebastien-Bottin, 75007 paris. Edited by probably the leading Renoir scholar, Claude Gauteur, this contains a goldmine of until now unknown Renoir pre-production documents. Of special interest is Renoir's synopsis for his adaptation of André Gide's *La Séquestrée de Poitiers.* This is, with Drouzy's *Dreyer,* the highpoint of the current French publishing season as regards film books.

Roger Richebé, *Au-delà de l'écran. 70 Ans de la vie d'un cinéaste,* Editions Pastorelly, 7 avenue Saint-Laurent, Monte-Carlo. The memoirs of Marcel Pagnol's constant collaborator and friend that also provide an interesting insight into the history of the *industry* of the French film.

Georges Sadoul, *Le Cinéma français 1890–1962,* Flammarion, 26 rue Racine, 75006 Paris. Although the first and only French-language history of the French cinema, Sadoul's volume has long been out of print. It has now been reprinted by its original publisher, Flammarion, which unfortunately has not seen fit to correct the many errors the 1962 edition contained nor update its otherwise excellent biographical dictionary. Nevertheless Sadoul's tome is a seminal work on French cinema and is probably the first introductory work one should consult upon deciding to confront the French cinema.

Christian Salé, *Les Scénaristes au travail,* Hatier, 59 boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris. 59 Francs. A collection of interviews with and filmographies for the eight screenwriters who dominate the French cinema: Jean Aurenche, Gerald Brach, Jean-Claude Carrière, Nina Companeez, Jean-Loup Dabadie, Jean Gruault, Jorge Semprum and Francis Veber. Some of the interviews are trite, but nevertheless Salé's book provides an appealing introduction to the work of seven men and one woman who are usually behind the contemporary masterworks of the French film.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Freud.* Screenplay and synopsis (1958) for John Huston's *The Secret Passion* (1962). Obliques, B.P. 1, Les Pilles, 26110 Nyons. Although Sartre asked that his name be removed from Huston's film, it is interesting to see from these two phases of Sartre's collaboration with Huston how much influence Sartre actually did have on the Huston film.

Daniel Serceau, *Jean Renoir, l'Insurgé,* Editions le Sycomore, 102 boulevard Beaumarchais, 75011 Paris. Starting with the hypothesis that Jean Renoir's work is "entirely political," Serceau goes on to demonstrate through a perspicacious analysis of *La Chienne, Toni* and *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* that Renoir, especially in the films he made before World War II, should be given credit for being, in his films, a most visionary social historian.

Le Tiers Monde en Film, a book-length special number of *CinémAction,* published by François Maspéro, 1 Place Paul-Painlevé, 75005 Paris. 46 Francs. Authoritative, the most recent French-language survey of Third world cinema.

Denise Tual, *Le Temps dévoré,* Fayard, 75 rue des Saints-Pères, 75006 Paris. Memoirs of the woman who was a close collaborator of the greatest of the

French directors, Robert Bresson, and who produced the first film, *Les Anges du Péché.*

Wajda, entretiens avec Jean-Luc Douin, Cana Editions, 14 rue du 8-mai-1945, 75010 Paris. A very timely book on the evolution of the maker of *Man of Iron.*

Andrzej Wajda, L'Atalante, 2 rue de l'Echelle, 44000 Nantes. A collaborative effort, a book of essays on various phases of Wajda's work and career.

Roger Weil-Lorrac, *50 Ans de Cinéma actif,* Editions Dujarric, 33 Champs-Elysées, 75008 paris. Written with the collaboration of French film historian Charles Ford, the memoirs of a man who was one of the most important money men in the French film world. One of the very rare books on the early French film industry.

More French Books (reviewed by other hands)

Pascal Bonitzer, *Le Champ aveugle,* Gallimard/Cahiers du Cinéma, 5 rue Sébastien-Bottin, 75007 Paris.
Bonitzer stands today as one of the last examples of the *Cahiers* breed of critic/theoretician, the kind which the journal spawned so well by carefully staying away from an academic approach to film studies (Bazin, Godard, Narboni as cases in point). *Le Champ aveugle* stays true to this tradition of provocative and inventive writing. Although Bonitzer introduces complex and vital elements of theory, he does it more *via* literary allusions (to Jonathan Dickson Carr, Roald Dahl, and Borges) than to film theoreticians (save for the canonized figure of Bazin). Bonitzer's comments on Hitchcock, on the construction of suspense and of narrative space, exemplify some of the best film writing coming out of France today.

—FABRICE ZIOLKOWSKI

Reynold Humphries. *Fritz Lang, cineaste americain,* Editions Albatros, 14, rue de l'Armorique, 75015 Paris, 60 F. A book in French by a Scotsman about a German film-maker's American work, and an excellent demonstration of modern continental film theory as applied to a body of films. The "close analyses" may be too close for those who want to know more about Lang and less about the cinema and how best to talk about it. Film theorists, though, will find this very generality and effort at precision most appealing.

—ALAN WILLIAMS

Aldo Tassone, *Akira Kurosawa,* Edilig, 3 rue Recamier, 75341 Paris. Tassone has written several books on Italian cinema, but his *Kurosawa,* now available in French, marks his first attempt at a foreign subject. Compensating for a lack of Japanese language and cultural background, Tassone provides thorough descriptions of each closely watched film, and extensive quoting and paraphrasing of the work of others on his subject. Anderson and Richie, Georges Sadoul, Donald Richie's unsurpassed monograph on Kurosawa, and the writing of Kurosawa himself loom large in the text—much of the book is a précis of my English translation of the director's autobiography. But Tassone also offers his own original insights, largely by virtue of comparisons with the work of European directors, and sets forth his own preferences among the films. He feels, for example, that *Stray Dog* outclasses much of the work of Hitchcock, Hawks and Huston. On the other hand he abhors films that smack of nationalism to the extent that he condemns all Japanese directors who chose to continue working during the war (he once suggested that Kurosawa's *The Most Beautiful* (1944) should not be included in a complete Italian retrospective of his work for fear of pacifist attack). To what extent these views reflect those of the general Italian filmgoing public I do not know. As a summary of all the best-known writing by and about Kurosawa to date Tassone's work is a piece of excellent scholarship, and it offers the added pleasures of an annotated bibliography and an extraordinary selection of well-reproduced stills. —AUDIE BOCK

Critic-historian Max Tessier has written two books on Japanese cinema that deserve the attention of film scholars the world over. In the great French encyclopedic tradition, Tessier offers a wide-ranging sampler of Japanese film, replete with filmographies, interviews and excellent stills. In his first book, *Le Cinéma japonais au présent,* actually a single issue of the journal *Cinéma d'aujourd'hui* (No. 15, Winter 1979–80), he covers 1959 to 1979, beginning with the Japanese "Nouvelle Vague" directors and covering all the most active film-makers from animators to documentarians to porno-film directors. His own astute observations are amplified by contributions from other Japanese film experts such as Donald Richie, Michel Mesnil and Ian Buruma, and the back pages even provide production statistics and a very useful glossary of Japanese film terms.

Tessier's second book, *Images du cinéma japonais* (Editions Henri Veyrier, 12 rue de Nesle, 75006 Paris, 1981), is much more than the superb collection of film stills the title implies (but it is that too). Here Tessier undertakes an ambitious, and highly successful, classification and historical study of Japanese cinema by genre. Bucking the French auteurist tradition, he makes a new kind of sense of the total picture of Japanese film by studying such usually neglected trends as the perennial remake and the monster movie. Again Tessier is nothing if not thorough, and in the midst of his cataloguing he succeeds in presenting his own "discovery" directors, from the silent era up to the present. Here too are an excellent bibliography and glossary.

Both of these books fill in many blanks left by overstudy of the same directors again and again by English-language writers. They are essential to any up-to-date library on Japanese film.

—AUDIE BOCK

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